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MILDRED THRONE

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# IOWA

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Editor*

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## COVER

"The Battle of Pittsburg Landing, April 7, 1862 — Final and Victorious Charge of the Union Troops Under Major-General Grant," from *Harper's Weekly*, April 26, 1862. There is much doubt as to whether this particular charge ever took place, but it was a popular story at the time, and as such was illustrated in the widely-read *Harper's Weekly*.



## LOCAL AID TO RAILROADS IN IOWA

*By Earl S. Beard*

The decade of the 1850's was a period of extensive railroad planning and some railroad building in Iowa. Companies organized to build and operate railroads grew up rapidly, almost overnight, in many eastern Iowa towns. Some of the roads proposed by these companies progressed little beyond the planning stage; others became forerunners of the present lines which criss-cross the state. Whatever the future of roads then projected, the first and most pressing need was for funds to build them. In search of these, every source was exploited, from individual investors to land grants from the federal government. Between these two extremes lay another source of income for the railroad corporations — "local aid."

The term "local aid," as it pertains to railroad history, is used in a broad sense to designate assistance to rail construction given by agencies other than the state or federal governments. Although such assistance varied greatly in form and amount according to time, place, and local conditions, it consisted generally of outright gifts to railroad companies, or of subscriptions to their capital stock by individuals and local political units who anticipated some benefit from the construction of a railroad in their vicinity. The necessity for this patronage arose from the fact that the cost of constructing a railroad was much greater than could be met by available private funds. Hence, after promoters of newly incorporated railroads had opened stock subscription books and solicited signers who would agree to purchase stock in the venture, the next step was an appeal to the political subdivisions through which the lines were to be built.

In Iowa constitutional provisions virtually prohibited financial assistance from the state government itself. Therefore, local aid assumed an unusual importance to railroad builders. Section 1 of Article VIII in the constitution, adopted when Iowa became a state in 1846, provided that:

The General Assembly shall not in any manner create any debt or debts, liability or liabilities, which shall singly or in the aggregate, with any previous debts or liabilities, exceed the sum of one hun-

dred thousand dollars, except in case of war, to repel invasion, or suppress insurrection. . . .

With the exceptions noted, a state debt above \$100,000 could be created only for some single object approved by a majority of the people at a general election. It had to be secured by a definite provision for payment. Reinforcing this provision was another that forbade the state, directly or indirectly, to become a stockholder in any corporation.<sup>1</sup>

Quite clearly the constitution makers were determined that Iowa should be safeguarded from the financial chaos that had fallen upon other states when the clamor for internal improvements resulted in extensions of state credit beyond the economic resources of their populations. Events of the decade following, however, were to show that the citizens of the new state were not immune to the widespread desire for improved transportation facilities; nor were they as fully protected from financial indiscretion as the planners had desired. While it was generally recognized that the public purse strings were tightly knotted at the state level, county administrations in many cases took the view that in the absence of positive restrictions they were free to lend credit as they chose in the furtherance of rail projects. Suiting this feeling to action ordinarily involved a process in which the people of a county voted bonds bearing an attractive rate of interest and exchanged them for the capital stock of a railroad. The railroad company was then expected to obtain construction funds by selling the securities to eastern investors.<sup>2</sup> Bonds were also the means of attracting capitalists into the field as active participants in building and operating railroad lines. County securities, in their hands, represented a guarantee of whatever liquid capital was brought into the enterprise.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Constitution of 1846*, Article IX, Section 2. Typical of state constitutions adopted about the middle of the century, restrictions such as these reflect a determination to avoid the disastrous internal-improvement debts incurred earlier by other states. In Iowa this attitude emerged strongly in the constitutional convention where a Whig minority was unsuccessful in its attempt to secure more moderate limitations. See Benjamin F. Shambaugh, *Fragments of the Debates of the Iowa Constitutional Conventions of 1844 and 1846* . . . (Iowa City, 1900), 341, 347-55; also Carl H. Erbe, "Limitations on Indebtedness," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 22:372-6 (July, 1924).

<sup>2</sup> As a means of expediting this procedure the General Assembly authorized railroads to dispose of local bonds at such discounts as might seem expedient. *Laws of Iowa, 1854-1855*, Ch. 128.

<sup>3</sup> Later court actions brought to recover interest and principal of bonds often revealed bondholders as officials actively engaged in the business of the railroad in-

Many Iowans thought that the practice of voting bonds for railroads was expressly authorized in sections of the Code of 1851 prescribing the method by which counties could approve tax levies to repay money borrowed for extraordinary expenditures incidental to the construction of "any road or bridge."<sup>4</sup> A controversy arose over the interpretation of the word "road" as used in the statute; was a railroad a road within the meaning of the law? Temporarily, at least, this issue was resolved in favor of the proponents of local aid when the State Supreme Court in 1853 ruled, in the case of *Dubuque Co. v. The Dubuque and Pacific Railroad Company*, that "road" as it appeared in the Code was indeed properly construed to mean "railroad." At the same time the Court considered the constitutional aspects of bond aid and concluded that the people might vote the credit of their counties with complete propriety because they had in no way conceded nor divested themselves of this power in the constitution.<sup>5</sup>

In every respect the decision represented a sweeping victory for bond aid enthusiasts, although the full Court report contained a pessimistic note in a dissenting opinion written by Associate Justice John F. Kinney. Justice Kinney rejected the reasoning by which the majority of the Court had found county bond aid constitutional and recited at length the evils likely to result from the unrestrained use of public credit for the benefit of private corporations. Noting that more than three million dollars had already been voted for such a purpose, he prophesied gloomily that if unchecked this debt would mount within five years to ten million dollars or more. The annual interest alone on such a debt, he pointed out, would be in excess of seven hundred thousand dollars — a crushing burden for the people of an infant state.<sup>6</sup>

Had the report come a few years earlier, Kinney's grave warning might have evoked a more sympathetic response — despite its coincidence with

volved. See Ethan P. Allen, "Gelpcke v. The City of Dubuque," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 28:178-81 (April, 1930).

<sup>4</sup> *Code of 1851*, Sections 114-124. Others desiring to vote bonds, but uncertain of their legal right to do so, requested the Governor to call a special session of the legislature to enact authorization. Report of railroad convention at Fairfield (Henry County) in *Burlington Weekly Telegraph*, April 30, 1853, cited by Richard C. Overton, *Burlington West: A Colonization History of the Burlington Railroad* (Cambridge, 1941), 64.

<sup>5</sup> 4 Greene, *Iowa Reports*, 1-6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-16.



judicial vindication of the bond voting scheme. By 1853 it was too late; sympathizers there were, but among the majority of the people a cautious approach to railroad affairs was thought to betray a regrettable lack of confidence in the future. During the previous year a rail connection had been established between Chicago and New York, and already another line was nearing completion from Chicago to the Mississippi River at Rock Island. The apparent imminence of a railhead on the eastern border of the state excited the imaginations of those who visualized the advantages of direct rail communication with Chicago and the markets of the East.<sup>7</sup> People residing in counties that had hesitated because of some doubt over their legal right to vote bonds for railroads now hastened to embark upon such programs of aid. Before 1853 was out, bond issues were voted for various railroad projects in the counties of Louisa, Des Moines, Polk, Jones, Mahaska, Johnson, Wapello, Jasper, Linn, Madison, Cedar, Dubuque, and Lee.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the absence of rules governing matters of form, the securities issued by these counties followed a general pattern that soon became well established. Almost without exception, bonds were redeemable in twenty years and bore interest of 7 to 10 per cent. An act of the General Assembly in 1855, stipulating that interest rates on bonds voted for railroads should not exceed 10 per cent, merely confirmed an accepted practice.<sup>9</sup>

Less uniformity prevailed in the terms under which bonds were to pass

<sup>7</sup> Dwight L. Agnew, "Beginnings of the Rock Island Lines, 1851-1870" (Ph.D. thesis, unpublished, State University of Iowa, 1947), 17-23, discusses the enthusiasm of the people of Davenport and Scott County over the prospect of a railroad between Chicago and Rock Island.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Springer, *History of Louisa County, Iowa* . . . (2 vols., Chicago, 1912), 1:218; Augustine M. Antrobus, *History of Des Moines County, Iowa* . . . (2 vols., Chicago, 1915), 1:353-4; *History of Polk County, Iowa* . . . (Des Moines, 1880), 700; R. M. Corbitt, *History of Jones County, Iowa* . . . (2 vols., Chicago, 1910), 1:208; *History of Mahaska County, Iowa* . . . (Des Moines, 1878), 307; C. Ray Aurner, *Leading Events in Johnson County, Iowa, History* . . . (2 vols., Cedar Rapids, 1912), 1:208; G. D. R. Boyd, "Sketches of History and Incidents Connected with the Settlement of Wapello County from 1843 to 1859 Inclusive," *Annals of Iowa* (first series), 6:187 (July, 1868); *The History of Jasper County, Iowa* . . . (Chicago, 1878), 367; *History of Linn County, Iowa* . . . (2 vols., Chicago, 1911), 1:63; *The History of Madison County, Iowa* . . . (Des Moines, 1879), 387-8; C. Ray Aurner, *A Topical History of Cedar County, Iowa* . . . (2 vols., Chicago, 1910), 1:287; Franklin T. Oldt (ed.), *History of Dubuque County, Iowa* . . . (Chicago, n.d.), 243; *History of Lee County, Iowa* . . . (Chicago, 1879), 508.

<sup>9</sup> *Laws of Iowa, 1854-1855*, Ch. 128.

into the possession of the railroad companies. Most of the agreements did provide that the bonds were to be exchanged eventually for an equivalent value in railroad stock at par, but beyond this the people of various counties attached such conditions that seemed to them most likely to assure the safety of their investments and the earliest completion of the railroads. When it seemed impossible to pursue both goals, safeguards frequently were sacrificed in the interests of rapid construction. Thus, when Davis County voted \$150,000 in bonds to aid the Fort Madison, West Point, Keosauqua and Bloomfield and the North Missouri railroads, the election proclamation merely stated: "Bonds to be issued when the county judge is satisfied that the building of the road is secured."<sup>10</sup> Lee County, in authorizing a \$200,000 bond issue for the Keokuk, Fort Des Moines, and Minnesota, and the same amount for the Fort Madison, West Point, Keosauqua and Bloomfield, provided that either company should receive its share of the bonds whenever the county judge felt that enough stock subscriptions had been made to insure completion of the road.<sup>11</sup> This looseness of terminology provided opportunities for sharp practice on the part of railroad promoters, and of course placed great stress on the ability and character of the county judge.

When a county did try to eliminate the possibility of fraud — by placing greater restrictions on the issuance of its bonds — it ran the risk of pressing matters too far. Jasper County, determined that the Lyons Iowa Central Railroad should show concrete evidence of its good faith before receiving the \$40,000 bond issue voted by the people, stipulated that the railroad should not receive the bonds until it had spent an equivalent amount in the county.<sup>12</sup> From one point of view this arrangement defeated a purpose of bond aid, since the company was forced to seek elsewhere for funds to use in the county before it could qualify for local aid. It was extremely difficult at this early date to reconcile accepted standards of prudence with the immoderate desire for railroads and the slender financial resources of the builders.

Recognizing the existence of conditions contributory to dilemmas of this kind, the General Assembly, in 1855, attempted to regulate matters so as

<sup>10</sup> Text of the proclamation appears in *History of Davis County, Iowa* . . . (Des Moines, 1882), 483-4.

<sup>11</sup> *History of Lee County* . . ., 508.

<sup>12</sup> *History of Jasper County* . . ., 367.

to afford some degree of protection to the communities — without placing any obstacles in the way of continuous construction progress. As approved, the law required that no bonds be issued until county judges were convinced that the “contemplated improvement” would be built up to or through their counties within thirty-six months from delivery of the bonds, and that all proceeds of bonds be applied within the county issuing them.<sup>13</sup> Again, except for the last clause, the effectiveness of an attempt at protection was dependent upon the judgment and reliability of a single official. A more reasonable plan was that evolved in 1856 by the people of Black Hawk County in an agreement with the Dubuque and Pacific Railroad Company. The company assumed the obligation of building through the county and locating passenger stations and freight depots at certain points. The county in return was to turn over portions of a \$200,000 bond issue at stated periods as the work progressed.<sup>14</sup> In this procedure neither party was required to commit itself fully until the other had demonstrated its ability and willingness to carry out the contract.

As has been indicated, county judges, as chief administrative officers, usually received broad discretionary power to decide when conditions imposed by the people had been fulfilled, and, consequently, the exact time that the bonds were to change hands and the circumstances under which the transfer would take place. Obviously this power was subject to certain abuses. In one instance, at least, a Cedar County judge opposed his own judgment to the expressed will of the people and obtained judicial sanction for his action. In 1853, when Cedar County approved bonds in the amount of \$50,000 for the benefit of the ill-fated Lyons Iowa Central Railroad, the proposition as voted upon provided that the bonds were to be issued to the company “only in the event of said railroad being constructed and running centrally through the county.” County Judge S. A. Bissell, an ardent railroad enthusiast, issued \$20,000 of the bonds before any of the road was built in the county. Shortly thereafter, when a tax was levied to meet interest on these bonds, several people resisted its collection, offering as a defense Judge Bissell’s violation of the conditions pertaining to the bond issuance. Litigation followed, and the dispute finally reached the State Supreme

<sup>13</sup> *Laws of Iowa, 1854-1855*, Ch. 194.

<sup>14</sup> *History of Black Hawk County, Iowa* . . . (2 vols., Chicago, 1915), 1:355. A similar arrangement was made in Jones County with the Iowa Central Air Line. See Corbitt, *History of Jones County* . . . , 1:208.



Court where, to the dismay of the taxpayers, it was ruled that the judge had the right to issue the bonds "on being made satisfied that the road *will* run centrally through the county."<sup>15</sup> The difference between satisfying the judge that the road would be built, and actually building it, came to light less than a year later when the whole project collapsed, and the promoter absconded with the funds of the embryo railroad.<sup>16</sup>

Although this incident illustrates the authority wielded by county judges in bond aid matters, it should be made clear that Bissell's attitude was not a typical one among these officials. More often they were skeptical of railroad pretensions and when possible observed a policy of caution in releasing bonds to the companies. Francis Springer, succeeding to the judgeship of Louisa County after an election authorizing bonds for the Philadelphia, Fort Wayne, and Platte River Air Line, resisted pressure from the electorate as well as from railroad officials before transferring the securities to the company. His consent to the transaction came finally in 1856, nearly three years from the time of the bond election, and then only upon receipt of a petition signed by more than nine hundred people of the county requesting that the bonds be released.<sup>17</sup>

The refusal of Judge Joseph H. Flint to issue bonds voted by Wapello County in 1853 for the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad also brought severe criticism. The judge maintained that the vote authorizing the bonds had been obtained by fraudulent representation of the time that the line was to reach Ottumwa, an explanation dismissed in scathing terms by the editor of the local newspaper:

This plea is worse than the plea of infancy (the baby act). The Judge appears to think that, notwithstanding the people had a plain, unmistakable proposition, fully written and printed, submitted to them, yet they were induced to believe that they were in fact voting for something entirely different. . . . The position of the Judge is self-evidently ridiculous, and nonsensically foolish.

Several other judges were scarcely less obdurate than Springer and Flint. Samuel A. Moore, G. C. Mudgett, and J. H. Hubbard, judges respectively

<sup>15</sup> 4 Greene, *Iowa Reports*, 328-35; Aurner, *Topical History of Cedar County* . . ., 1:287. Italics added.

<sup>16</sup> *History of Clinton County, Iowa* . . . (Chicago, 1879), 492; Dwight L. Agnew, "Iowa's First Railroad," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY*, 48:9 (January, 1950).

<sup>17</sup> Springer, *History of Louisa County* . . ., 1:220-22. A copy of the petition and the names of some of the prominent signers appear on 220-21.

of Davis, Jones, and Black Hawk counties, delayed issuance of bonds after they had been voted, or refused to issue them at all.<sup>18</sup>

For several years after 1853 bond aid continued to be given to railroads, but as time passed there was a very noticeable decrease in the number of counties taking such action. Most of the eastern counties having any immediate prospects of obtaining railroads had already voted bonds; and in the western part of the state, where "railroad fever" also ran high, sparsity of population and low property valuations acted generally as deterrents. Apparently unimpressed by these disabilities, two counties in the southwestern corner did vote bonds: Fremont, for the Fort Madison, Bloomfield and Missouri River Railroad, in 1854; and Mills, in 1856, for the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad. Webster, in the west central section, also approved an issue in 1856 — for the Dubuque and Pacific. Perhaps with greater justification, Pottawattamie, whose county seat was Council Bluffs, voted bonds for the Council Bluffs and St. Joseph Railroad in 1857.<sup>19</sup> But with these exceptions, approval of county bond propositions during the period from 1853 to 1857 was confined to the central and eastern parts of the state where the counties of Winneshiek, Black Hawk, Iowa, Chickasaw, Benton, and Davis joined the now lengthy list of those that had previously authorized loans of credit to assist railroads. Late in 1856 Lee, Dubuque, and Louisa, border counties on the Mississippi anxious to become distribution centers for the interior of the state, held new elections and voted further bond obligations.<sup>20</sup>

Elsewhere bond proposals began to fare badly as builders found it in-

<sup>18</sup> Ottumwa Courier, March 17, 1859; see also *History of Davis County . . .*, 485; Corbitt, *History of Jones County . . .*, 1:208; *History of Black Hawk County . . .*, 1:356.

<sup>19</sup> *History of Fremont County, Iowa . . .* (Des Moines, 1881), 420-21; Washington Press, Dec. 3, 1856; J. W. Lee, *History of Hamilton County, Iowa . . .* (2 vols., Chicago, 1921), 1:62-3; *History of Pottawattamie County, Iowa . . .* (2 vols., Chicago, 1883), 1:155. Bond voting in Pottawattamie was controlled by its ambitious and rapidly growing county seat, Council Bluffs, later to become a very important railroad center.

<sup>20</sup> Iowa City Daily Reporter, Oct. 25, 1856; *History of Black Hawk County . . .*, 1:335; Harley Ransom, *Pioneer Recollections . . . Iowa County . . .* (Cedar Rapids, 1941), 132; *History of Chickasaw and Howard Counties, Iowa . . .* (2 vols., Chicago, 1919), 1:344; *History of Benton County, Iowa . . .* (2 vols., Chicago, n.d.), 1:130-31; *History of Davis County . . .*, 483-5; *History of Lee County . . .*, 509-510; Oldt (ed.), *History of Dubuque County . . .*, 245; Springer, *History of Louisa County . . .*, 223.



creasingly difficult to justify additional local support in the face of lagging progress on rail projects started earlier in the decade. Iowa railroad maps showed an elaborate system of lines serving every area, but of these thousands of miles of track projected on paper, only sixty-eight had been completed and placed in operation by January 1, 1856 — the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad, predecessor of the Rock Island, from Davenport to Iowa City.<sup>21</sup> A few miles of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad, forerunner of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, had been built from Burlington westward toward the Skunk River, but these were not opened to traffic until June of 1857.

Charges of fraud against certain promoters became widely circulated over the state and contributed to the stiffening of attitudes toward bond issuance at the county level. People of counties along the surveyed line of the Lyons Iowa Central Railroad, particularly, were aroused and angry over the disappearance of several officials with the cash and negotiable securities of the company. Riots had taken place among unpaid workmen when a subcontractor of the Northern Iowa Railroad Company absconded with its funds. Criticism became so strong in a number of localities that it was not thought worth while to hold elections. In other places, notably in Jones, Jackson, and Van Buren counties, elections were held and bond propositions defeated.<sup>22</sup>

Parallel with criticism of lagging progress, and blending with it in some places to create an atmosphere unfriendly to further bond aid, was a growing feeling that county debts already in existence were too large, and that the power to create them should be curtailed. An expression of this viewpoint came in the first biennial message of Governor James W. Grimes in 1856:

The Constitution wisely provides that the State shall not in any manner create a debt exceeding one hundred thousand dollars. The framers of that instrument did not imagine that there was a great necessity to prohibit the counties from creating large public debts, for the reason that the history of the country did not then

<sup>21</sup> *Iowa Historical and Comparative Census, 1836-1880*, 126-7.

<sup>22</sup> Corbitt, *History of Jones County . . .*, 212; *The History of Marion County, Iowa, and Its People . . .* (2 vols., Chicago, 1915), 1:237; *The History of Jackson County, Iowa . . .* (Chicago, 1879), 435; Aurner, *Leading Events . . . Johnson County . . .*, 215-16; Cyrenus Cole, *A History of the People of Iowa . . .* (Cedar Rapids, 1921), 281; Iola B. Quigley, "Some Studies in the Development of Railroads in Northeast Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 20:226-7 (October, 1935).

present the case of a county becoming a large stockholder in private corporations. . . . Without stopping to inquire into the authority under which loans have heretofore been voted, it seems to me that prudence and sound policy requires [sic] that some check be imposed upon the future exercise of this power to create public indebtedness.<sup>23</sup>

A similar uneasiness over the amount of local indebtedness was freely expressed in the convention held in 1857 for the purpose of revising the state constitution. Fearing that the credit of the state as a whole was in danger of impairment, a number of delegates strongly urged a constitutional provision barring local political corporations from making loans to railroads and owning their capital stock. Others, friendlier to railroad interests, insisted that since railroad activity had been confined primarily to the eastern part of the state, such a provision would be unfair to the western counties which had not yet received the opportunity of using their credit to obtain railroads. In the end, a compromise was agreed upon limiting the aggregate debt of counties and municipalities to 5 per cent of the value of taxable property.<sup>24</sup>

Brighter prospects for local financing appeared temporarily when a group of towns appealed to the legislature for authority to take part in the bond voting scheme. For the most part these were towns that hoped, by generous stock subscriptions, to assure themselves of places on the main lines of railroads projected through their vicinities. From a legal point of view, special permission in some form seemed necessary because neither the statutory provision of 1851, authorizing county bond aid, nor the Supreme Court decision of 1853, interpreting it and affirming its constitutionality, had made any concession to the powers of other local political units. As far as towns were concerned, the matter of bond issuance for the benefit of railroads still lay in the hands of the General Assembly. And there it remained, for instead of establishing a uniform procedure through the passage of a general law, the General Assembly adopted the practice of dealing with each case separately.<sup>25</sup> Under this policy a series of enactments in 1856 and

<sup>23</sup> Benj. F. Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa* . . . (7 vols., Iowa City, 1903), 2:37-8.

<sup>24</sup> *Constitution of 1857*, Article XI, Section 3; *The Debates of the Constitutional Convention of the State of Iowa* . . . (2 vols., Davenport, 1857), 1:290 et seq.

<sup>25</sup> However, a general law had previously been enacted prescribing definite forms to be followed in making the preliminary petitions, holding elections, and issuing bonds.

1857 either legalized previously held bond elections, or authorized the holding of such elections, in the towns of Fort Madison, Lyons, Maquoketa, Bellevue, Anamosa, Keokuk, and Dubuque.<sup>26</sup>

Prior to this time, however, several towns, particularly those located along the Mississippi, had voted bonds without any apparent authority for doing so. An early instance of such action was that of Davenport which voted a joint subscription with Scott County in 1853. Dubuque also had voted bonds on several occasions, relying for its authority to do so upon a clause in its charter of incorporation empowering the city council to borrow money for any "public purpose," provided that two-thirds of the voters gave their consent; but it is doubtful that the legislators had railroads in mind when the charter was granted in 1847. Burlington, with a similar clause in its charter, had voted a loan of \$75,000 to the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad in June of 1855.<sup>27</sup>

Unfortunately, from the viewpoint of the railroad builders, the flurry of legislation in which bond assistance from towns was made available in any significant amount soon died out. Near the end of 1857 the effect of the panic of that year was felt widely over the state in the form of declining prices for agricultural products. This downward trend, continuing through 1858, brought the prices of many basic products to points 25 to 40 per cent below their former levels.<sup>28</sup> A consequent decrease in the supply of ready money — which in Iowa had never been equal to the demand for investment capital — provided a strong argument against further additions to the public debt and the tax burden. During 1858 and 1859 not a single town received permission to issue bonds for railroad purposes.<sup>29</sup>

A conservative feature of this law was a section limiting tax assessment for bond payment to 1 per cent or less per year of the taxable property. *Laws of Iowa, 1854-1855*, Ch. 149.

<sup>26</sup> *Laws of Iowa* (extra session), 1856, Chs. 25, 29; 1856-1857, Chs. 24, 178, 205, 239.

<sup>27</sup> See Harry E. Downer, *History of Davenport and Scott County, Iowa* . . . (2 vols., Chicago, 1919), 1:901. The Dubuque charter of incorporation is in *Laws of Iowa, 1845-1846*, Ch. 123. For Burlington, see Antrobus, *History of Des Moines County* . . ., 1:447-8.

<sup>28</sup> Tables and graphs in Norman V. Strand, "Prices of Farm Products in Iowa, 1851-1940," Iowa State College Agricultural Experiment Station, *Research Bulletin* No. 303 (May, 1942), 938-54.

<sup>29</sup> Only one other instance occurred in which town bonds issued for railroad aid were approved by the legislature. This was in the case of Camanche in 1860. *Laws of Iowa, 1860*, Ch. 68.

For a time railroad building operations very nearly ceased, although some of the companies refused to give up the struggle until every possible source of capital had been exhausted. One of these, the Dubuque and Pacific, having failed in an attempt to obtain a British loan, and finding no market for its own securities except at ruinous discounts, turned to the people of Buchanan County in 1858 with a proposal reflecting some measure of its desperation as well as genuine resourcefulness and ingenuity. The vice-president of the railroad, Platt Smith, a prominent attorney of Dubuque, outlined the company's plan in a meeting held at Quasqueton. Alluding to the existence of agricultural surpluses and of products of the land for which there was no worthwhile market, Smith proposed that these be exchanged for stock in the railroad. Briefly, the people were asked to vote a property tax of 1 per cent and to receive, as payment for flour, corn, oats, cattle, hay, stone, timber, and other products, scrip issued by the company to its construction contractors. County officials were then to accept this scrip in payment of the tax, exchanging it later for paid-up stock in the company. Despite its apparent reasonableness, this proposal failed to gain the majority necessary for approval when submitted to the voters in a special county election.<sup>30</sup>

Rejection of a local aid plan designed especially to meet most of the objections arising from depressed economic conditions was due in part to the continuing presence of the critical attitudes previously noted. However, the influence of a new development in railroad financing is also to be discerned. Two years earlier, in 1856, following a long period of agitation by the builders and the people of the state, Iowa railroads had received an extensive land subsidy from the federal government.<sup>31</sup> So munificent was this grant that all concerned looked forward to the solution of financing problems in the accumulation of funds derived from land sales. When Hamilton County was asked to legalize a bond issue for the Dubuque and Pacific in 1858 a Webster City newspaper had this to say:

<sup>30</sup> *History of Buchanan County, Iowa* . . . (Cleveland, 1881), 93-6; negotiations for the British loan are described in *Report of the Dubuque and Pacific Railroad Company, 1858*, 13-18.

<sup>31</sup> With one exception every session of the General Assembly before 1856 asked Congress to donate lands for railroads. See *Laws of Iowa, 1848*, joint resolution 5, memorial 3; 1848-1849, joint resolutions 5, 15; 1850-1851, memorials 4, 5; 1852-1853, joint resolutions 2, 3, memorials 1, 3. The Commissioner of the General Land Office estimated the total amount of land in the grant to be 3,456,000 acres. *Senate Executive Documents, 35 Cong., 1 Sess., Vol. 2*, p. 89.



It is . . . a query in the minds of many, as to what the Company want these bonds for. They have a most magnificent land grant — sufficient to build the road and leave a large surplus — and have had nearly \$2,000,000 worth of fine property donated to them along the line of the road. . . . In these hard times, every dollar of taxation, present or prospective, makes the people groan.<sup>32</sup>

This attitude, together with the knowledge that recipients of the subsidy were obligated by the terms governing its acceptance to build over specified routes and to complete the lines within a definite time, engendered a certain complacency among people of localities known to be directly on the routes.<sup>33</sup> Ebenezer Cook and Henry Farnam, promoters of the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad, complained in an interview in 1856 that some people were exhibiting a spirit of indifference toward material aid, feeling that the road would be built along a certain line in any case.<sup>34</sup> At this stage, then, refusal of assistance through local political action was not attributable to a lessened desire for improved transportation, but rather to a feeling that such assistance was no longer necessary.

Scattered here and there over the state were a few citizens either unwilling to trust everything to the land grants or too impatient to await results. Several of these people, apparently influenced by events in neighboring states, suggested in 1858 that the state of Iowa lend its credit to railroads. In the forefront of the movement was Charles Aldrich, an enterprising newspaperman whose enthusiasm led him to brush aside constitutional obstacles to such action by the state. Aldrich spoke airily of the "ample security" which the railroads could supply if the legislature would pass the preliminary law necessary to the assumption of a state debt of over \$100,000 and submit it to the people for approval. When the legislature adjourned without having acted on his proposal, he urged counties to choose delegates to a convention which would demand an extra session of the General Assembly:

This subject is one of the utmost importance, and action should be taken on it at once in every County. Missouri and Minnesota

<sup>32</sup> Webster City *Hamilton Freeman*, Jan. 28, 1858.

<sup>33</sup> The terms of the grant were set forth in the bill transferring the lands to the state, and these were incorporated in the act of the General Assembly distributing the lands to the companies. *United States Statutes at Large*, 11:9; *Laws of Iowa* (extra session) 1856, Ch. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Iowa City *Daily Evening Reporter*, July 17, 1856.

have loaned their credit to their railroads, and they are making rapid progress, while Iowa is standing still. Shall we follow their example and awaken enterprise, and develop our inexhaustible resources, or "gig back," and let the grass again grow up in our streets?<sup>35</sup>

No great response greeted this plea. Platt Smith of the Dubuque and Pacific announced his hearty approval, as did George Greene, who, as a member of the State Supreme Court in 1853, had written the majority opinion declaring bond aid constitutional.<sup>36</sup> Most Iowans, however, had not lost faith in the land grants. Their feeling was better expressed by the editor of the *Independence Guardian*: "We have not . . . become convinced that our roads may not be built by private exertion, aided by the munificent land endowment made to them."<sup>37</sup>

With continued confidence in the land grants generally prevailing, there was very little public reaction when the State Supreme Court in 1859 ruled that the legislature had not given blanket authorization of bond aid in the Code of 1851, and, in fact, had not intended to do so.<sup>38</sup> In effect, this ruling was a direct reversal of a part of the decision rendered in *Dubuque Co. v. Dubuque and Pacific Railroad Company*, but it left untouched the constitutional power of the General Assembly to enact such legislation if it so desired. Hence, when that body convened in the following year, the bond aid question was in much the same position it had occupied prior to the judicial interpretation of 1853. Now, however, perhaps for the first time, the General Assembly found itself unhampered by pressure from towns and counties willing to make almost any sacrifice to obtain railroads. In this changed atmosphere it announced an entirely new policy in an act prohibiting future bond assistance by subordinate political units.<sup>39</sup>

Even as the legislators approved the change they may well have realized that they were dealing with a dead issue. Of greater importance now, and still to be decided, was the final disposition of disputes over bonds that had been voted earlier. Disagreements had cropped up soon after the beginning of bond aid, and suits affecting various aspects of the practice were almost

<sup>35</sup> Webster City *Hamilton Freeman*, Feb. 25, Nov. 5, 1858.

<sup>36</sup> See letter of George Greene to Platt Smith printed in *ibid.*, Nov. 26, 1858.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 12, 1858.

<sup>38</sup> 10 Withrow, *Iowa Reports*, 166.

<sup>39</sup> *Revision of 1860*, Ch. 55, article 8.

continuously in the courts after 1853. Frequently, at first, these originated with the complaints of disgruntled property owners who had opposed the issuance of bonds from the beginning and then, after defeat in the elections, had sought to avoid the payment of taxes necessary to keep up the interest. Later, as bond assistance began to appear unnecessary, or as it seemed that building progress did not reflect the amount of aid given, county administrations themselves began to resist the issuance of bonds to meet further subscription installments or interest payments as they fell due on bonds already issued.

Actually, from the start, there had been little likelihood that the bonds would yield results commensurate with the expectations of the voters, even when the proceeds were honestly and efficiently applied. County bonds never brought their face value in the eastern money markets, discounts of 25 to 35 per cent being a normal expectation among railroad men. By the time brokerage fees and other expenses incidental to negotiation had been deducted, the cash proceeds were not usually much greater than 60 per cent of the original value of the bonds.<sup>40</sup> This meant that the money available for construction within a given county often amounted to little more than half the sum visualized by the people. Almost inevitably wide gaps developed between the results as foreseen by the bond voters and the actual work accomplished.

Whatever the causes, the courts were called upon increasingly to decide cases pertaining to the bonds, and several of these attacking the constitutionality of taxation to support bond aid were carried to the Supreme Court of the state. As the personnel of the Court changed, it became apparent that succeeding jurists considered the majority opinion in *Dubuque Co. v. The Dubuque and Pacific Railroad Company* to be socially unwise, and, from a judicial standpoint, of questionable soundness. Yet, despite very outspoken criticism of the ruling of 1853, the Court continued to uphold it, fearing to disturb the complex of transactions that had taken place in reliance upon it.<sup>41</sup> But the tide was turning, and a decision completely over-

<sup>40</sup> These figures were cited in the Convention of 1857 by J. C. Hall of Burlington, earlier a judge of the State Supreme Court. *Debates . . . Constitutional Convention . . . Iowa*, 1:292-3.

<sup>41</sup> For cases concerning bonds, see *Iowa Reports*: 5 Clarke, 45-6; 10 Withrow, 166 *et seq.*; 4 Greene, 328; 14 Withrow, 107, 593; 15 Withrow, 385, 486; 12 Withrow, 527; 6 Clarke, 265, 304, 391.

turning *Dubuque Co. v. The Dubuque and Pacific Railroad* was not long in coming. In 1862, after the terms of two supporters of the Dubuque decision — Judges Woodward and Stockton — had expired, Chief Justice George B. Wright joined the other two members of the Court in declaring that the General Assembly possessed no power under the constitution to authorize local political corporations to vote taxes for the purpose of becoming stockholders in railroad companies.

Justice Ralph P. Lowe, writing the opinion of the court, presented the central point of his argument in the form of a syllogism:

All police powers which the State may legitimately confer upon her subdivisions, may be reclaimed and exercised by herself, but she cannot reclaim and exercise the right of a stockholder in a railway company; therefore she cannot confer the exercise of this right as a police power upon said subdivisions.

Realizing that the effect of the decision would be to cut away legal grounds for the collection of interest or principal of bonds, Lowe expressed his concern lest innocent bondholders be injured, and the people of the state charged with bad faith, but he concluded rather blandly that “. . . it is one of those unfortunate misadventures which sometimes will happen in the best governed and best intentioned communities.” Still, he suggested, all would be well if those concerned were disposed to be charitable and fair in the absence of compulsion.<sup>42</sup>

So far as the bondholders were concerned, a major difficulty with Lowe's recommendation of fair treatment according to the dictates of conscience was that by 1862 few people in the counties that had voted bonds felt any moral obligation to stand behind them. They simply did not think that they had received their money's worth. Seven hundred and thirty-one miles of railroad, much of it poorly constructed, hardly seemed an adequate result for an investment variously estimated to be between seven and twelve million dollars, especially since the railroads themselves were nearly all heavily mortgaged.<sup>43</sup> Hence the people of the state were inclined to hail the decision joyously as a means of escaping debt considered to be unjust and bur-

<sup>42</sup> 13 Withrow, *Iowa Reports*, 419-20, 423.

<sup>43</sup> Mileage statistics in *Iowa Historical and Comparative Census, 1836-1880*, 126-7. The legislature authorized land grant railroads to issue construction bonds secured by the property of the companies, and all took advantage of the opportunity. See *Laws of Iowa, 1856-1857*, Ch. 182.



densome. Typical of the press reaction was the comment:

The decision breaks the yoke from the neck of innumerable cities and counties who have hitherto labored under a burden most oppressive. The decision looks to the initiated like simple repudiation, but the parties relieved will not question its legality.<sup>44</sup>

With equal candor the *Dubuque Times* remarked that: "The great mass of the people will hail this decision with joy, but it will fall hard on the holders of some of these bonds."<sup>45</sup> Considering the mood of the people, the editor had ample justification for his prediction regarding the fate of the bondholders. There seems little doubt that the great majority of them would have gone unpaid had conditions remained unchanged — but this was not to be. Circumstances were radically altered less than a year later when the United States Supreme Court overruled the decision of the state court. In a summary of its opinion, the federal Court declared:

Although it is the practice of this court to follow the latest settled adjudications of the State courts giving constructions to the laws and Constitutions of their own States, it will not necessarily follow decisions which may prove but oscillations in the course of such judicial settlement. Nor will it follow any adjudication to such an extent as to make a sacrifice of truth, justice, and law.

Municipal bonds, with coupons payable to "bearer," having by universal usage and consent, all the qualities of commercial paper, a party recovering on the coupons will be entitled to the amount of them, with interest and exchange at the place where, by their terms, they were made payable.<sup>46</sup>

In one stroke the positions of the principal parties to the bond controversy were reversed: citizens of bond voting communities now found themselves faced with demands for payment backed by the full weight and authority of the nation's highest judicial body. Indignation and defiance followed, but it accomplished no useful purpose. In the end, all holders who chose to press claims received some degree of satisfaction, though many of them accepted compromise agreements. The majority of these settlements, however, were deferred until after the Civil War.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *Burlington Weekly Argus*, June 27, 1862.

<sup>45</sup> *Dubuque Times*, reprinted in *Webster City Hamilton Freeman*, July 5, 1862.

<sup>46</sup> 1 Wallace, *United States Reports*, 176.

<sup>47</sup> Even the State Supreme Court defied the federal Court for a time. It issued a mandamus enjoining the county officers from levying taxes to pay the bonds. Entire

During the war railroad building in Iowa bogged down much as it had for a brief time after the panic of 1857. Several companies kept hopes and interest alive by occasional spurts of activity, but taken as a whole Iowa lines added only 190 miles of track between 1860 and 1865. Thus, while it should not be thought that Iowa railroads remained completely dormant during the war, it is true that the tempo of construction and the avidity of local demands for extension lost some of their intensity. A variety of factors helps to explain the building lag and the reduced level of enthusiasm. In addition to the demand imposed by the conflict itself upon energies and attention that might otherwise have been expended in railroad building, there were shortages of material and labor, as well as more attractive opportunities for investment capital. And, despite generally higher prices and greater agricultural prosperity,<sup>48</sup> there was little to be hoped for in the way of local aid. Local assistance in the form of gifts and stock subscriptions from individuals had not been inconsiderable. The Dubuque and Pacific Railroad, for example, owned seven hundred town lots, many of them donated by people along the route. Much of its eighty-acre holding in Dubuque had been given to it by citizens of the town. Railroads sometimes employed special agents to solicit all kinds of aid along their projected lines. A. C. Fulton acted in this capacity for the Mississippi and Missouri, and J. S. Andrews for the Council Bluffs and St. Joseph.<sup>49</sup> This type of aid was inhibited by the same combination of factors that had brought bond aid to an end shortly before the war began.

Another possible source of aid, county swamp land, was little exploited until after the war. Supposedly this was marsh land within the state, or low land subject to frequent overflow, which had been transferred from the public domain to state ownership in 1851. The state, in turn, had presented this land to the counties in which it lay — later, in 1858, giving permission for its utilization in railroad building. Actually, due to a mixture of genuine misunderstanding and deliberate misrepresentation on the part of those

Boards of County Supervisors were arrested for levying the tax and for refusing to levy it. See *Iowa City Republican*, April 15, July 1, Sept. 12, Oct. 7, 1868; Jan. 6, 13, 1869.

<sup>48</sup> Strand, "Prices of Farm Products in Iowa, 1851-1940," 938-54.

<sup>49</sup> See *Report of the Dubuque and Pacific Railroad Company, 1858*, 20; Webster City *Hamilton Freeman*, Jan. 28, 1858; Hiram Price, "Recollections of Iowa Men and Affairs," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 1:6-8 (April, 1893); *History of Fremont County* . . . , 422.

charged with selection of the swamp land, a part of it was of very good quality, quite suitable for agriculture. Much of it was overlapped by the railroad grants of 1856, and some of it had been located and filed upon by settlers. *Bona fide* claims of settlers were disposed of in 1855 when the federal government agreed either to turn over to the state the purchase price paid by the claimant, or to allow the state to select indemnity lands elsewhere in the public domain.<sup>50</sup> Other problems, including some question over the validity of the state grant to the counties, and disputes arising from conflicting claims between railroads and counties, remained for settlement in the postwar period.

As the war drew to a close there appeared reawakened interest in railroad building, and with it a renewal of efforts to obtain local backing. Interestingly enough, these phenomena at first emerged more emphatically in the eastern and central parts of the state, sections in which rail lines had been completed before or during the war. Reasons for the revival of agitation at these places soon became abundantly clear. The people had learned through experience that location on the line of a single railroad did not in itself automatically guarantee a cure for all transportation ills. Indeed, it seemed to raise problems that had scarcely been thought of during the earlier period of strenuous exertion to obtain a railroad — any railroad — at almost any price. In the stress and excitement of financing and building roads, few had stopped to think of more prosaic matters such as shipping rates and the possible consequences of funneling all lines through one point. However, when it seemed that railroad operators were more interested in profits than in functioning as benevolent public service institutions, and that Chicago, as the focal point of Iowa lines, was in a position to regulate marketing conditions to its own advantage, they became matters of grave concern. The proper remedy, many believed, lay in the construction of roads running south to connect with Missouri lines terminating at St. Louis. Those who favored the plan insisted that it would afford the double advantage of lower shipping costs and higher selling prices, the theory being that competition among railroads would result in reduced freight rates. Bidding between Chicago and St. Louis for agricultural exports, they reasoned, would send market prices upward.

Local newspapers, ever in the forefront of railroad ferment, reflected

<sup>50</sup> *United States Statutes at Large*, 10:519-20, 634-5; *Laws of Iowa*, 1852, Ch. 13; 1858, Ch. 132.



these attitudes in editorials and in comments from readers criticizing railroad operation as it had been conducted and calling attention to what were considered to be serious flaws in the existing system as a whole. Much of this agitation centered at Iowa City, the first town of importance located any appreciable distance from the eastern boundary of the state that had received a railroad connection. Having been served by the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad since 1856, its citizens, and those of Johnson County, were perhaps in as good a position as any in the state to pronounce judgment on railroad operation. Their complaints against the Mississippi and Missouri, together with proposals for a southern route, appear in letters and editorials in local newspapers through much of 1865 and 1866.<sup>51</sup>

Similar views were heard at the executive level in the message of Governor William M. Stone in January of 1866:

Experience has already sufficiently demonstrated the incapacity of existing lines of railroads for conveying our immense agricultural productions to the eastern markets. And it is also equally clear that, whatever may be the capacity of these eastern lines, their immoderate thirst for monopolizing the avenues of transportation and their exorbitant charges for carrying stock and grain, render them formidable enemies to our agricultural prosperity. For this, the only permanent remedy is the establishment of competing lines.<sup>52</sup>

The fact that some Iowans were beginning to think in terms of lines running in various directions from the borders of the state marked a fundamental change in the conception of what constituted the proper scope of a railroad system. Previously, planners in Iowa, like those of other Midwestern states, had been concerned primarily with the task of building up a transportation system for the use of citizens within the state.<sup>53</sup> Reaching the markets of the East was of course an ultimate goal, but as a problem it was

<sup>51</sup> See especially the *Iowa City Republican*, Feb. 1, 13, March 1, May 31, June 7, 14, July 19, Sept. 20, 27, Oct. 11, 25, Nov. 1, 8, Dec. 20, 1865; Feb. 1, June 13, 20, 27, July 4, Aug. 15, 1866; for accounts of railroad meetings, of committee reports, and resolutions, Dec. 6, 13, 1865; Feb. 14, May 23, 30, Dec. 5, 6, 20, 1866; Jan. 2, March 13, 1867. See also *Iowa City State Press*, March 29, June 28, July 12, 26, Aug. 2, 23, Sept. 20, Oct. 11, 18, 25, Nov. 1, Dec. 6, 13, 1865.

<sup>52</sup> Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations* . . . , 3:56-7.

<sup>53</sup> Robert E. Riegel, *The Story of the Western Railroads* . . . (New York, 1926), 30.

regarded with far less immediacy than that of acquiring a network over the state. Partial explanation of this outlook lay in the early pre-eminence of Chicago as a terminal for eastern lines and the known determination of railroad companies in Illinois to build between Chicago and the Mississippi River. Since Iowa seemed assured of a continuous link with cities of the East, once her lines also touched the Mississippi, there seemed to be no particular reason for concern about markets or other problems outside her borders. The influence of this feeling is to be seen in the distribution of the first federal land grant to railroads of the state. The four routes selected for the subsidy extended completely across the state from the Mississippi to the Missouri and were fairly evenly spaced between the northern and southern borders. The theory that these were to be trunk lines serving the convenience of all localities desiring to construct branches was underscored by the action of the legislature in making it mandatory that intersecting railroads permit connections with each other, without prejudice.<sup>54</sup> Much of this thinking was now revised, as eastern Iowa realized the disadvantages inherent in dependence upon a single market and a few main lines of railroad.

During the first few years after the war the question of competing lines was not a pertinent one in the western part of the state, since the greater portion of that section had no railroads at all. The desire for access to a southern market would come in time, but immediate concern was for extension of the half-completed east-west trunk lines. For those not located on the direct lines of the main routes, the goal was construction of branches to intersect one of them. In this sense there was a continuing tendency to view Iowa railroads as comprising a self-contained system dangling at the end of eastern connections.

In many respects the postwar zeal for railroads among western communities matched the earlier enthusiasm of eastern towns and counties. Over and over people were told that railroads would bring in settlers, increase the value of lands, and provide an efficient means of transporting agricultural produce to better markets.<sup>55</sup> Again, as during the fifties, they became converted to the idea that local aid was the necessary price if a town or county

<sup>54</sup> *Laws of Iowa, 1862*, Ch. 158.

<sup>55</sup> See Fontanelle *Adair County Register*, Feb. 7, July 11, 18, 25, Aug. 29, Sept. 12, Dec. 26, 1867; Jan. 23, March 19, April 16, 1868; Jan. 12, 1869; Webster City *Hamilton Freeman*, May 13, June 17, July 1, 1868; Fort Dodge *Iowa North West*, Nov.

wished to assure itself of the golden benefits of railroad transportation. As a whole, the people indicated by their actions complete agreement with Governor Stone's assertion: "To encourage and foster our railroad enterprises by every feasible means, is manifestly the part of wisdom."<sup>56</sup>

Rather surprisingly, in view of earlier attitudes, there was no general revival of the demand that land grant railroads be built from the proceeds of land sales. People in areas not yet touched by railroads were not inclined to quibble when a matter as vital as a place on a rail line was at stake. Probably, too, unwillingness to press the issue grew out of a sense of futility. The grants were ten years old in 1866, and yet not a single railroad in the state had been constructed without some form of local aid. By 1877, however, two railroads could say directly that they had received no local aid. These were the Crooked Creek Railway and Coal Company having eight miles of track and the Grinnell and Montezuma Company with thirteen and five-eighths miles.<sup>57</sup> Some Iowans by this time had lost faith, either in the land itself as a source of revenue for building purposes, or in the willingness of railroad companies to utilize it properly.

But many must have realized that, according to the Iowa law accepting the railroad grants, the lands were not to be turned over to the roads except in 120-section lots on the completion of each 20-mile segment. Thus although some roads had large grants, on paper, after 1856, the lands were not immediately available. The Burlington and Missouri River, for instance, did not begin to sell its lands until 1870. Federal land grants had not removed the necessity for local aid.

Railroads, when they became land sellers, found themselves in competition with land speculators, as well as with areas of free land in Iowa and to the west. Not every settler accepted the advice that it was better to pay ten dollars an acre for land near a railroad than to settle on free land remote from one,<sup>58</sup> and those who did were seldom prepared to pay cash. The Burlington and Missouri River Railroad, with the best record among Iowa companies of land sales to actual settlers, found it necessary to offer long-

21, 1865; Sept. 5, 6, 1866; June 24, Oct. 26, 28, 1869; Fort Madison *Plain Dealer*, Dec. 16, 1869; Council Bluffs *Bugle*, June 7, July 6, 1866; Jan. 1, 1867; also R. A. Smith, *A History of Dickinson County, Iowa* . . . (Des Moines, 1902), 369-75.

<sup>56</sup> Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations* . . . , 3:56.

<sup>57</sup> Report, Board of Railway Commissioners, Iowa, 1878, pp. 262, 382.

<sup>58</sup> Henry V. Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States, 1872-1873*, xxxi.

term credit.<sup>59</sup> It is doubtful that western communities, with their growing sense of urgency in railroad matters, would have been willing to postpone service until the land had been sold and payment received.

On the other hand, it is fairly certain that some of the companies disposed of their grants inefficiently, if not fraudulently, and never made a real effort to apply them to the use for which they were intended. There were many dark hints and charges concerning the disposal of land grants in Iowa, but it is difficult to find acceptable evidence to support them. D. C. Cloud, Muscatine attorney and unrelenting foe of railroads during the seventies, charged that the roads were controlled by a Wall Street clique as a means of fleecing the people through extortionate rates and misuse of local and federal aid. Cloud was intemperate in expression and did not offer very convincing proof. William Larrabee, a saner critic of the same period, had this to say:

The State of Iowa has not derived that benefit from the large land grants made to its railroads which her people had a right to expect. The land grants enriched the promoters of these enterprises much more than they did the State in whose interest the grants were presumed to be made.

It has been shown that some of the companies disposed of large blocks of land under terms which must be regarded as suspicious to say the least.<sup>60</sup>

Despite disappointment over the land grants, railroad interest rapidly approached a pitch rivaling that of 1853. With a general acceptance of the principle of local aid prevailing, the problem in the late sixties became one of deciding what form it would take. Swamp lands were a possibility, especially after the counties were successful in securing clear titles.<sup>61</sup> The people of counties owning such land seem to have been less reluctant to part with it than with any other form of wealth — corporate or individual. This may have been due to the fact that the land had cost the people nothing in money or effort; in some cases they were scarcely aware of ownership. But not all counties possessed such lands, and in any event their value

<sup>59</sup> Overton, *Burlington West* . . ., 295, 325, 340.

<sup>60</sup> D. C. Cloud, *Monopolies and the People* . . . (Muscatine, 1873), 15, 31–9; William Larrabee, *The Railroad Question* . . . (Chicago, 1893), 328; Hobart C. Carr, "Early History of Iowa Railroads" (M. A. thesis, unpublished, State University of Iowa, 1938), 61–4.

<sup>61</sup> 76 *United States Reports*, 89.



was not great enough to accomplish the desired purpose — although railroad companies were willing enough to accept them when opportunities arose. Something further was thought necessary — some means of overcoming the latest decision of the State Supreme Court in the bond cases, which had held taxation for the purpose of community stock ownership to be unconstitutional.

Finally, in 1868, the General Assembly succeeded in devising a plan that skirted around this disability by authorizing townships, towns, or incorporated cities to vote taxes, not to exceed 5 per cent of the value of taxable property, and to turn over the tax, as a gift, to the railroad or railroads involved. In order to qualify for the money it was only necessary that the companies show that an amount equal to the tax had already been expended on construction of the road.<sup>62</sup> Acting under this authority, a number of towns and townships in Worth, Mills, Fayette, Hamilton, Jackson, and Madison counties quickly voted tax aid.<sup>63</sup> Others were preparing to do so when the State Supreme Court suddenly, in 1869, a little more than a year after passage of the act, announced that it too was invalid on constitutional grounds. The measure did not authorize a legitimate exercise of the taxing power, said the Court, because the money was not intended for a public purpose; to the inevitable minority opposed to such a levy it represented a coercive contribution, violating both the general spirit of the constitution as to the sacredness of property and the specific provision declaring that no man should be deprived of his property without due process of law.<sup>64</sup>

Undaunted by judicial rejection of its earlier work, the legislature, when it convened in 1870, promptly passed another act authorizing taxation for railroad construction. The only essential change from the statute of 1868 was a provision that tax money voted for railroads could not be drawn upon until it could be shown that double the amount had already been expended on construction.<sup>65</sup> Though it is difficult to see how this difference cured

<sup>62</sup> *Laws of Iowa, 1868*, Ch. 48.

<sup>63</sup> *History of Mitchell and Worth Counties, Iowa* . . . (Springfield, 1884), 699; *History of Mills County, Iowa* . . . (Des Moines, 1881), 438-9; *The History of Fayette County, Iowa* . . . (Chicago, 1878), 453-4; J. W. Lee, *History of Hamilton County, Iowa* . . . (2 vols., Chicago, 1912), 1:148; *History of Jackson County* . . ., 463; *History of Madison County* . . ., 388.

<sup>64</sup> 27 Stiles, *Iowa Reports*, 29.

<sup>65</sup> *Laws of Iowa, 1870*, Ch. 102.



any of the defects of the earlier law, the State Supreme Court, during the same year, again considered the question. This time the Court decided that tax aid for the benefit of railroads was constitutional. The Court now reasoned that the use contemplated for the tax was essentially a public one; further, referring to the fact that the legislature had twice passed substantially the same law, it declared that the power of nullifying legislative acts should not be exercised in doubtful cases, but only in those where the constitutional infraction was "clear and palpable."<sup>66</sup> Probably some explanation of this reversal is to be found in the changed personnel of the Court. Of the judges who had declared tax aid unconstitutional in 1869, only one, Joseph M. Beck, was a member of the court in 1870. The terms of two others, John F. Dillon and George B. Wright, had expired. Chester C. Cole, who had disagreed with the majority in 1869, now joined with the new judges, James G. Day and William E. Miller, to reverse that decision.

The legislature itself was to be guilty of two reversals within the space of the following six years. Responding to conditions of agricultural depression, and especially to the pressure of Grange hostility toward railroads, the General Assembly repealed authorization of tax aid in 1872, only to replace it in 1876 after the principal Grange demand had been satisfied and the popularity of the movement had begun to wane.<sup>67</sup> The new statute contained a feature worthy of notice, a provision by which taxpayers were assured of stock ownership in return for their money. According to the terms of the law, after a railroad tax had been voted a person paying his tax would be entitled to a certificate showing the amount of the payment. This certificate would be exchangeable at the office of the railroad company for an equal value in shares of capital stock.<sup>68</sup> In substituting the individual in the place of the local political unit as the shareholder, the scheme very skillfully avoided an aspect of bond aid that the Court had found objectionable in 1862.

The practice of voting tax aid now became well established, even as the state legislature and Supreme Court vacillated in their views. Towns and

<sup>66</sup> 30 Stiles, *Iowa Reports*, 9.

<sup>67</sup> Mildred Throne, "The Grange in Iowa, 1868-1875," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY*, 47:22-32 (October, 1949), describes the rising tide of Granger feeling against railroads leading to passage of a law regulating rates, and the rapid decline of Granger influence very soon thereafter. For the regulatory law and the law repealing tax aid see *Laws of Iowa, 1874*, Ch. 68; *1872*, Ch. 50.

<sup>68</sup> *Laws of Iowa, 1876*, Ch. 123.

townships in at least twenty counties voted taxes for railroads before 1873; subordinate units in another twenty-two or more did the same before the end of the century.<sup>69</sup> Iowans, it seemed, were quick to exploit any available means of disposing of a part of their wealth in the interests of railroad furtherance. Whether this was necessary in order to accomplish the desired result is hardly within the scope of the present discussion to decide. Very probably private capital would have been unwilling, at this time, to assume all of the risk involved in constructing some of the lines Iowans believed vital to their security and prosperity.

Actually there is little to be gained by trying to determine whether or not railroads in Iowa could have been built by private capital alone. The significant point is that the people of the state seemed to think help was necessary, either in the absolute sense that successful construction was impossible without it, or in the sense that railroads would be attracted only to communities offering assistance — though it is unlikely that Iowans of this period bothered to make very fine distinctions in a matter that was believed to bear so vitally upon their material well-being. While they may not have accepted at full value all the exuberant claims made for railroads, they were often sufficiently impressed to feel that immediate sacrifices in the interest of acquiring a rail line would be more than offset by future benefits.

The railroad companies themselves were not apt to inquire very closely into any distinctions that the people may or may not have made. Experience soon taught them that in any case the end result for them tended to be the same. Almost invariably they were thrust into a bargaining position that could scarcely have been stronger, and they seem to have realized how matters stood. Frequently builders adopted a most imperious tone in dealing with individuals and communities along the routes of their railroads. When the Cedar Rapids and Missouri River Railroad was under construc-

<sup>69</sup> These figures are derived from a survey of county histories, *Reports* of the Board of Railroad Commissioners, Iowa, and local newspapers. No claim of completeness is made, but the large number of towns and townships that voted tax aid in counties for which records are available indicates how widespread was the practice. Local units within the following counties voted tax aid before 1872: Benton, Monroe, Keokuk, Jones, Jasper, Emmet, Dickinson, Delaware, Davis, Clayton, Montgomery, Marshall, Allamakee, Calhoun, Worth, Mills, Fayette, Hamilton, Jackson, and Madison. Those within which tax aid was voted after the law of 1876 were: Kossuth, Fremont, Dubuque, Jackson, Dickinson, Black Hawk, Worth, Montgomery, Marshall, Marion, Madison, Lucas, Louisa, Hamilton, Emmet, Decatur, Clayton, Calhoun, Adair, Allamakee, Benton, and Greene.

tion, John I. Blair and W. W. Walker, two men who controlled the company, visited Boone County where they demanded and received the promise of the county swamp lands and swamp land funds together with free right-of-way as the price of building across the county. The town of Boonesborough was assessed \$10,000, twenty acres for station grounds, and free right-of-way for the privilege of having the line run through the town. At the appointed time in 1865 the town was able to fulfill all conditions except the full amount of the cash subsidy; \$1,200 of it consisted of notes which Blair did not regard as negotiable. He demanded that they be endorsed by a prominent citizen, John A. McFarland. When McFarland refused, Blair announced that the town was to have three days to arrange things satisfactorily. No action was taken by the end of that time: whereupon Blair changed the route of the line so that it ran to the present-day site of Boone, where he had acquired a personal interest in town lots.<sup>70</sup>

During the same year James F. Joy, president of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, and a director of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad, made at least two visits to Iowa for the purpose of informing people along the proposed route of the donations expected of them. The people of Chariton, for example, were told that if they wanted the road they would have to provide \$50,000; Albia was given a like amount to raise.<sup>71</sup> In a similar manner the Milwaukee and Des Moines Railroad established the sum of \$1,000 per mile as the price the people of Des Moines would have to pay in order to obtain the line.<sup>72</sup> Chariton, Oskaloosa, and Garden Grove received a demand of \$4,000 per mile from the Iowa and Southwestern. Marshalltown contributed depot grounds, the right-of-way, and \$32,000 to the Iowa Valley Company.<sup>73</sup> Prices were still high in 1875 when Ottumwa people desired a station on the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific. They learned that it could be had — for the consideration of depot grounds, right-of-way, and \$25,000.<sup>74</sup>

Local rivalries figured prominently in the ease with which railroads obtained valuable gifts from the towns and counties along their routes. If

<sup>70</sup> *The History of Boone County, Iowa* . . ., 408–414.

<sup>71</sup> Overton, *Burlington West* . . ., 174–7.

<sup>72</sup> Des Moines *Iowa State Register*, April 10, 1872.

<sup>73</sup> Marshalltown *Marshall County Times*, May 8, 1868; Ottumwa *Progressive Conservator*, Nov. 3, 1870, cited in Carr, "Early History of Iowa Railroads," 79.

<sup>74</sup> Des Moines *Iowa State Register*, April 16, 1875.



railroads at first were desirable because of the usual advantages associated with rail transportation, their value seemed to become magnified when two or more neighboring communities were induced to compete for the privilege of a location on the lines. Sometimes there was no need for introducing any artificial stimulus to the spirit of rivalry between neighboring towns or counties. People realized only too well that the opportunity of obtaining a railroad occurred with relative infrequency. They knew, too, that only a limited number of points in any locality could be located on the direct line.<sup>75</sup> This knowledge, together with a tendency toward a short-term outlook in material matters, created a sense of great urgency or impatience. Typical was the comment in an Iowa City newspaper: ". . . if we do not secure this road and it passes west of us, it will forever afterwards be impossible for us to secure a North and South outlet."<sup>76</sup> Characteristic also was the resolution adopted in a railroad meeting held at North Liberty in 1865: "Resolved, That Johnson County donate half a million dollars rather than this Rail Road [Iowa North Central] should be made twenty miles east or west of us."<sup>77</sup> A resolution such as this, presented in all seriousness by a town of 619 people, suggests something of the gravity with which these affairs were viewed.

Fears of the dire consequences which would follow the failure to attract a rail line were not always without justification. At least one place, Crescent City, a boom town which owed its existence to the expectation of becoming a terminus of the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad, nearly disappeared when Council Bluffs was selected in its stead.<sup>78</sup> Another town, Butler Center, lost its position as the seat of Butler County because it had no railroad. The honor went to Allison which was more favorably located in regard to the rail line.<sup>79</sup> This was a serious loss because the county seat enjoyed the

<sup>75</sup> Occasionally railroads were built in a way that seemed to defy this general truth. Zig-zag construction, when resorted to, was usually an attempt to take advantage of all proffered local aid. An early road projected between Dubuque and Keokuk was called the "Ram's Horn Railroad" because of its proposed course. Charles Negus, "Early History of Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* (first series), 12:11 (January, 1874).

<sup>76</sup> *Iowa City State Press*, Oct. 4, 1865.

<sup>77</sup> Proceedings of meeting reported in *Iowa City Republican*, Dec. 13, 1865.

<sup>78</sup> D. C. Bloomer, "Notes on the History of Pottawattamie County," *Annals of Iowa* (first series), 10:177-8 (July, 1872).

<sup>79</sup> *History of Butler and Bremer Counties . . .* (Springfield, 1883), 306; Arthur Francis Allen (ed.), *Northwestern Iowa, Its History and Traditions . . .* (3 vols., Chicago, 1927), 1:182.

commercial advantage of serving people who went there to pay taxes or to transact other official business. Recognition of this fact led Adel, county seat of Dallas County, to give its backing to a narrow gauge project. Hampton of Franklin County was motivated by the same consideration in dealing with the Central of Iowa.<sup>80</sup>

Usually the rather frantic attempts of these county seat towns to retain or enhance their prominence by virtue of rail connections were products of their own initiative. This fact helps to explain the local aid policies railroad companies often adopted. As previously suggested, it was not always necessary to appear as blunt and aggressive as did Blair and Joy on certain occasions. A simple alternative procedure much employed was that of withholding announcement of an exact route until all interested communities in the general area had been given an opportunity to make their offers. Other things being more or less equal, it was then quite an easy matter to accept the best one. In this way the Cedar Rapids and Missouri River Railroad chose Council Bluffs as its western terminus instead of Sioux City which had also made a determined effort to obtain it.<sup>81</sup> The town of Vinton in Benton County was able to secure a branch line of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Minnesota by the process of voting a larger cash subsidy than had the neighboring community of Shellsburg.<sup>82</sup> Centerville in Appanoose County was disappointed in 1867 when the people of Davis County outbid it for a branch of the North Missouri. When an opportunity to obtain the Chicago and Southwestern presented itself four years later, Centerville managed to discourage competitors by offering \$125,000 and free right-of-way.<sup>83</sup>

These examples tend to show that from the standpoint of the railroads the policy of allowing rivalry to produce proffers of local aid worked very

<sup>80</sup> R. F. Wood, *Past and Present of Dallas County . . .* (Chicago, 1907), 113; I. L. Stuart, *History of Franklin County . . .* (2 vols., Chicago, 1914), 1:232-3.

<sup>81</sup> Council Bluffs *Bugle*, July 12, 1866. Council Bluffs paid its large subsidy, although "the conviction soon became general, on the part of nearly all, that this large donation was wholly unnecessary, the railroad managers having, it is believed, previously determined to construct their roads to Council Bluffs." See Bloomer, "Notes on the History of Pottawattamie County," *Annals of Iowa* (first series), 11:441 (April 1873).

<sup>82</sup> Luther B. Hill (ed.), *History of Benton County, Iowa . . .* (2 vols., Chicago, n.d.), 1:133.

<sup>83</sup> *History of Appanoose County, Iowa . . .* (Chicago, 1878), 394.

well. This did not mean that the localities were always unaware of the tactics being practiced upon them. Probably the reverse was true, but any resentment remained fairly well muffled as long as there was a chance to obtain the objective. As might be expected, however, unsuccessful bidders sometimes became bitter when they realized that the game was lost. It was customary in such a case to denounce the railroad company for doing what must have been rather transparent all along.

Occasionally towns were persuaded to offer unusually large amounts of local aid in exchange for some special concession from a railroad. Thus Pacific City in Mills County agreed to turn over three hundred town lots to the Council Bluffs and St. Joseph Company on condition that no other station would be maintained in the county for a period of ten years. Cedar Falls considered the donation of forty acres of town land a sound investment, since the railroad agreed to use the land as the site of its repair shops.<sup>84</sup>

While it is true that communities sometimes were tricked or badgered into granting more aid than was justified, or more than they could well afford, it appears also that in the period after the Civil War there were few instances in which they received no return on their investments. When tax aid was involved this was due in part to the provision in each tax aid law requiring the expenditure of funds equal to or double the amount of the tax money before railroads were entitled to receive it. Unlike some cases of the bond aid era, a company had to possess some financial backing and be willing to demonstrate its good faith before it became eligible for local assistance. Moreover, the people of towns and townships erected further safeguards. Though they responded quite readily by voting the tax levies, they were determined to get full value for their money. Special conditions intended to assure this result were frequently attached to the proposition as it was voted upon. Webster Township in Madison County, for instance, voted a 5 per cent levy, but stipulated that it would be paid by installments. Two

<sup>84</sup> Report, Board of Railroad Commissioners, Iowa, 1880, p. 241; Isaiah Van Metre (ed.), *History of Black Hawk County, Iowa* . . . (Chicago, 1904), 54. Dennison, Crawford County; Estherville, Emmet County; and Perry of Dallas County all gave special subsidies for the privileges of having stations or shops. See Eugene N. Hastie, *Hastie's History of Dallas County, Iowa* (Des Moines, 1938), 105-106; *History of Emmet County and Dickinson County, Iowa* . . . (2 vols., Chicago, 1917), 1:172; and F. W. Meyer, *History of Crawford County, Iowa* . . . (2 vols., Chicago, 1911), 1:153.



and one-half per cent was to become payable when trains were running within two miles of the center of the township, and the remaining money was to fall due a year later.<sup>85</sup> Apparently a road that proved its worth by remaining in operation a year was considered a safe investment. Other widely used protective devices included very definite limitations upon the area within which the tax money could be spent and requirements for the operation of trains within a definite time.

However local aid was regulated and distributed, and whatever the forms it assumed, the response in terms of railroad mileage was truly phenomenal. In 1882 Iowa, with 7,997 miles, ranked fifth among the states of the nation.<sup>86</sup> Too often it has been taken for granted that this remarkable achievement was due to the fortunate position of the state with reference to the city of Chicago to the east and the transcontinental railroad to the west. This assumption has derived additional support from the fact that the state government never loaned its credit nor gave subsidies, thus decreasing speculation and insuring a railroad system that was better constructed and more efficiently operated than would otherwise have been the case.<sup>87</sup> It is true that Chicago's early pre-eminence as a terminal for eastern lines and the energy of Illinois companies in pushing their roads to the Mississippi gave an impetus to railroad building in Iowa. Certainly, too, trunk lines building across the state redoubled their efforts when it became apparent after the Civil War that the Union Pacific Railroad would be completed. But it is misleading to examine Iowa's rail system against a background of constitutional restriction of state debt and assume that the railroad strides of a quarter century were due primarily to an accident of geography. Location was undoubtedly important; yet the admission of that fact does nothing to reduce the important role of local aid in making it meaningful. The organization of local railroad companies and their promises of local funds served to attract the attention of eastern investors, without whose help many Iowa roads — especially the east-west lines — could not have been built. Easterners who took an active part in building Iowa roads, men such as Forbes, Joy, Blair, Farnam, and Durant, expected as a normal procedure that local communities would contribute material support.

<sup>85</sup> *History of Madison County . . .*, 388-9.

<sup>86</sup> *Iowa Historical and Comparative Census, 1836-1880*, 128-9.

<sup>87</sup> Riegel, *Story of Western Railroads*, 26-7.

A very pertinent question, as yet unanswered, concerns the over-all extent of local aid in relation to the total cost of building the lines. A completely accurate statement of the amount of local aid, necessary for a comparison of this kind, would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to compile. Efforts of the newly created Board of Railroad Commissioners in 1878 to secure, through the railroads themselves, the information required for such a report met with little success. Several of the main interstate lines reported that their records had been destroyed in the Chicago fire; other companies returned incomplete or evasive replies.<sup>88</sup> Again, for the *Commission Report* of 1880 only 8 of 39 roads operating in Iowa responded to the question on local aid. The amount covered by these answers totaled just under \$500,000; the cost of building and equipping the 39 roads was given in the same *Report* as \$202,963,543.<sup>89</sup> Obviously the figure of a half million dollars in local aid was a gross underestimate for the state as a whole. The railroad indebtedness, including accumulated interest, of Lee County alone in 1879 was about \$750,000.<sup>90</sup> Apparently discouraged by the results of its efforts, the Railroad Commission, after 1881, gave up trying to get information on local aid.

Other sources of information are equally unrewarding. The figures quoted by various writers seem to be little more than mere guesses. Larrabee's estimate of \$50,000,000 by 1893 perhaps has more merit than some of the others because of the wide range of his experience in Iowa railroad affairs during the period of very active local aid. Still, it is only a shrewd guess of the total value of such varied forms as taxes, grants of rights-of-way, bonds, swamp lands, and public and private gifts of money. His claim that the \$50,000,000 represented 40 per cent of the total cost of railroads in Iowa is clearly erroneous. The *Commission Report* of 1893 listed total cost of construction and equipment at \$894,566,629.<sup>91</sup> Fragments of information pertaining to Iowa's railroad experience suggest that confusion over local aid statistics has existed since a very early time. As far back as 1857

<sup>88</sup> *Report*, Board of Railroad Commissioners, Iowa, 1878, pp. 36, 107-296.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 1880, pp. 192, 279, 359, 419, 448, 455, 489, 516, 527.

<sup>90</sup> *History of Lee County* . . . , 512.

<sup>91</sup> William Larrabee served as governor of the state, and, at one time or another, was involved in railroad affairs as shipper, promoter, stockholder, and manager. See his book *Railroad Question*, 329; also *Report*, Board of Railroad Commissioners, Iowa, 1893, p. 64.

delegates to the Constitutional Convention were quite uncertain about the amount of bond aid that had been given prior to that time. Figures ranging from \$6,000,000 to \$11,000,000 were bandied about in the course of debates.<sup>92</sup> The latest economic study quotes a figure given in 1909 of \$7,000,000 or more in local aid by 1856.<sup>93</sup>

An approach to the problem through the records of local political subdivisions meets with the obstacle of records lost or destroyed. The records contained in county histories, all too frequently the only available sources of information, are not adequate for the necessary comprehensive survey. Furthermore, some of the aid voted in periods of enthusiasm was repudiated at later dates. Nevertheless, enough information is available to demonstrate that local aid was given generally throughout the state over a sustained period. That such aid was sought by the railroad builders — in fact, insisted upon in most cases — is an indication of its importance to the eastern financiers who, in the last analysis, made much of Iowa's railroad network possible. Iowans, in many cases, started the roads on the proverbial shoe-string. They did what they could to raise funds and then turned to the East for further financial aid. When the projects were feasible, such aid was usually forthcoming, provided always that a certain amount of "local aid" had been, or would be, provided.

Looking backward over Iowa's railroad experience, it is apparent that the constitution makers were eminently successful in sparing the state government the financial burden of "internal improvements." Thus Iowa avoided the financial chaos which occurred in Missouri, Minnesota, and Arkansas as a result of state financing of railroads. But the constitutional provision reckoned without the overwhelming desire of the people of Iowa for a railway system. If the makers of the constitution had any notion that the cost of railroads would be borne wholly by private enterprise, they misjudged the force of attitudes within the state regarding the desirability and necessity of railroad transportation — and the willingness of the people to share in the cost of obtaining it. Every county and every town wanted a railroad; without one, they reasoned, prosperity and progress would pass them by. Blocked by the state constitution, the General Assembly, even had it been

<sup>92</sup> *Debates . . . Constitutional Convention . . . Iowa*, 1:292.

<sup>93</sup> Frederick A. Cleveland and Fred Wilbur Powell, *Railroad Promotion and Capitalization in the United States . . .* (New York, 1909), 217, cited in George R. Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York, 1951), 94.

willing, could do nothing to further a railway network. Nothing daunted, the people — individually or through their county and municipal units — stepped into the breach and opened their public and private purses to the corporations. Stock subscriptions, county and municipal bonds, taxes, grants of land for depot sites or rights-of-way — all were utilized to aid the railroad builders. It is true that some of the money granted in the first flush of enthusiasm was never paid, but enough found its way into the corporate tills to aid materially in starting, if not in completing, the building of Iowa's railroads.

By the seventies, with the main arteries of transportation completed, interest turned from building railroads to controlling them. Falling prices and high freight rates combined to bring about the Granger law of 1874, regulating freight rates. Anti-railroad sentiment in the seventies was as strong as pro-railroad enthusiasm in the fifties and sixties. Iowans felt that, by their local aid to the roads, they had helped to make them possible; therefore, they did not propose to submit without a struggle to what they considered the unjustified "extortion" of the railroad "monopolies." Thus the "local aid" of the fifties and sixties can be said to be one factor in the growth of anti-railroad sentiment in later decades.



## IOWA REACTIONS TO WENDELL PHILLIPS, 1867

By *Waldo W. Braden*

The lecture season of 1866-1867 was a busy one for Iowa audiences. The successful conclusion of the war, the availability of numerous eastern lecturers, a better arrangement for booking,<sup>1</sup> the comparative ease with which lecturers could now reach many Iowa towns by railroad, and the general postwar prosperity insured Iowans of a full season of entertainment and enlightenment. As a result, local groups were able to choose from a list which included Wendell Phillips, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Tilton, Horace Greeley, Frederick Douglass, W. H. Milburn, P. T. Barnum, Bayard Taylor, Carl Schurz, Grace Greenwood, John B. Gough, John G. Saxe, Henry Vincent, John S. C. Abbott, Clara Barton, and Anna Dickinson.

Of those who came, perhaps the most controversial and the most widely advertised was Wendell Phillips, the irrepressible lawyer-agitator, who at the time was fighting the administration of Andrew Johnson and its program of reconstruction. Phillips had been in the public eye for twenty-five years as an abolitionist as well as a lyceum lecturer.<sup>2</sup> His hatred of slavery had been so intense that he had often denounced the Constitution, because it protected that institution, and had consequently advocated a peaceful dissolution of the Union.<sup>3</sup> The sharpness of his tongue and the bitterness of his attacks upon slaveholders had brought him wide publicity and had sometimes aroused threats of mob action.

With the secession of the southern states and the coming of the conflict, Phillips, in spite of his previous abhorrence of violence, supported the war

<sup>1</sup> See Hubert H. Hoeltje, "Notes on the History of Lecturing in Iowa, 1855-1885," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 25:62-131 (January, 1927); Luella M. Wright, "Culture Through Lectures," *ibid.*, 38:115-62 (April, 1940).

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Korngold, *Two Friends of Man* (Boston, 1950), *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> The following statement, made in 1842, is typical of his utterances on this subject: "Many of you, I doubt not, regret to have this man [George Latimer, a fugitive slave] given up, but you cannot help it. There stands the bloody cause in the Constitution, — you cannot fret the seal off the bond. The fault is allowing such a Constitution to live an hour. . . . When I look upon these crowded thousands and see them trample upon their consciences and the rights of their fellow men at the bidding of a piece of parchment, I say my curse be upon the Constitution of the United States." Quoted in *ibid.*, 166.



effort and the administration of Lincoln. But emancipation and the triumph of the Union forces had not been sufficient to quiet his agitation. After the war he had merely shifted his emphasis from abolition to equal rights for the Negro and to harsh reconstruction. Joining forces with Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens, Phillips had sought to achieve in the public forum what his colleagues were bent upon doing in Congress, that is, the complete discrediting of the President. The effectiveness of this triumvirate can be ascertained from the remarks of President Johnson. On February 22, 1866, Johnson had said, "Suppose I should name to you those I look upon as being opposed to the fundamental principles of this government, and are now laboring to destroy them. I say Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania; I say Charles Sumner of Massachusetts; I say Wendell Phillips of Massachusetts." Johnson had bitterly lashed out at his three antagonists in a speech which he delivered September 8, 1866, in St. Louis: "I have been called Judas Iscariot and all that. . . . If I have played Judas, who has been my Christ. . . . Was it Thad Stevens? Was it Wendell Phillips? Was it Charles Sumner?"

Phillips had long regarded the lecture platform as an admirable place from which to present his political and social ideas. In the intensity of the new battle he once more looked to his fall and winter lectures as a means of advancing his cause. As a result, he prepared for the season of 1866-1867 a discourse entitled "The Perils of the Hour," a purely political diatribe which permitted him to extemporize at will upon day-to-day developments. After a number of eastern engagements during the fall, he set out on a circuit of twelve thousand miles, which carried him as far west as Iowa, and on which he delivered in all some sixty lectures.<sup>4</sup> During March and April he addressed thirteen audiences in the eastern half of Iowa:

- March 14: Keokuk
- March 15: Des Moines
- March 16: Mount Pleasant
- March 23: Dubuque
- March 24: Universalist Church, Dubuque
- March 25: Independence
- March 26: Waterloo
- March 27: Cedar Falls
- March 29: Cedar Rapids
- March 30: Clinton

<sup>4</sup> Lorenzo Sears, *Wendell Phillips* (New York, 1909), 265.

April 5: Muscatine  
April 6: Washington  
April 8: Iowa City

In spite of the fact that he was an excellent drawing card, Phillips presented a real problem to the nonpartisan lecture association whose primary objectives were entertainment and instruction. It was probably Phillips' reputation as an agitator rather than as a lecturer that explained the current interest in him. Although the program committees recognized that the people wanted to see and hear the abolitionist who had been fearless in his utterances and who had not been deterred even by mobs, the program planners were also aware that to permit him to present his incendiary political views was likely to stir up discord among the patrons, particularly if the membership included many Democrats. In short, the program committees faced the dilemma of whether they should invite Phillips to speak upon reconstruction and related problems, and risk criticism, or whether they should play safe and ask him to repeat one of his familiar lectures of the past.

When it was learned that he had been engaged to come to Keokuk, the advisability of his appearance immediately became a subject of bitter debate there. The Keokuk *Gate City*, a Republican paper, boldly argued that it would be a mistake to ask Phillips to throw aside a lecture "upon stirring and engrossing questions with all the splendor of his eloquence" and substitute one of "his musty manuscript lectures" such as "The Lost Arts," which "he threw aside years ago" and which was "as dead as the lost arts whose mortuary record it commemorates."<sup>5</sup> The Democratic journal took exception to the point of view of the rival paper and countered:

If he be the traitor that he is represented to be . . . and we have no doubt of it, then we say it is an insult to all Union-loving citizens of the city to invite him here to bleat his treason under the endorsement of our Library Association. And any democrat who would go to hear him, would, in our opinion, disgrace himself and the party to which he belongs.<sup>6</sup>

Even the neighboring Fort Madison *Plain Dealer* joined in the controversy. "Wendell Phillips has a national reputation, and we go to hear him as we would go to any other show. As to the propriety of lecture associa-

<sup>5</sup> Keokuk *Gate City*, March 2, 1867.

<sup>6</sup> Keokuk *Daily Constitution*, March 3, 1867.

tions inviting men of extreme views, to address them — that is another matter, about which we have our own opinion. . . . We are off for Keokuk.”<sup>7</sup> There can be little question that many attended the lecture in a spirit similar to that of the Fort Madison editor; they went for the show.

Evidently the Republicans in the Library Association prevailed, for Phillips was invited to speak on “The Perils of the Hour.” On the night of March 14, the auditorium of the Chatham Square Church was “filled to overflowing with eager listeners.” They gladly paid the admission fee of fifty cents in order to hear a speaker whom the *Gate City* had declared to be “the first of American orators.” One source estimated that the sponsors cleared on the evening about two hundred dollars.<sup>8</sup>

Usually Phillips spoke extemporaneously. Consequently the remarks that he made in Keokuk, as well as those he made to other Iowa groups, were reported only in part. The *Daily Constitution* was dismayed with Phillips for placing the responsibility for the recent war upon the South. It quoted Phillips as saying, “It was Faneuil Hall against the slave barracoon, and Faneuil Hall having won we have a right to cram Faneuil Hall down the throat of the South.” To accomplish this goal he was quoted as advocating the use of military force until the South “was fully and thoroughly reconstructed on the basis of northern civilization and northern ideas.” He denounced President Johnson as a “traitor” and demanded the President’s removal.

The *Constitution* observed that “much that the lecturer said was warmly applauded by the radical portion of the audience, especially his denunciation of the people of the South and the President of the United States. His invective against Gen. Grant was received in silence when the infamous slanderer ought to have been hissed and hooted out of the hall.”<sup>9</sup>

In many ways Phillips disappointed his Keokuk listeners, in that he did not live up to what they anticipated of a “terrible abolitionist” and a “fierce radical.” The *Constitution* “presumed” that “a great many” were “somewhat disappointed.” The *Gate City* conceded that “at least eight-tenths of the audience” did not find him as “eloquent as they expected.” Phillips “talked to the audience; didn’t storm at it.” The Fort Madison *Plain Dealer* described his manner as “mild, polished, and indicative of perfect self pos-

<sup>7</sup> Fort Madison *Plain Dealer*, March 14, 1867.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, March 21, 1867.

<sup>9</sup> Keokuk *Daily Constitution*, March 16, 1867.



session." Almost with regret the editor said, "One looks in vain for the wrinkles, or violent gestures or querulous tones naturally attributable to a radical reformer. . . ." <sup>10</sup> Emphasizing the same characteristics, the *Gate City* gave a more complete picture of the man:

One is struck by the sincerity and earnestness of Mr. Phillips. But numberless other men are sincere and earnest. His great strength, that which distinguishes him from every other man that we ever heard speak upon political topics, is his transcendent apprehension of principles, and his clearness in stating them. . . .

Gray haired, benignant-featured, mild, the moral faculties as largely developed as the reflective, this placid countenanced, benevolent, quietly-speaking old gentleman, who has a cordial shake of the hand and a hearty greeting for even the youngest boys — this can scarcely be the terrible Abolitionist and fierce Radical who has been the best abused and most ill-abused man in the country for a quarter of a century. <sup>11</sup>

Seemingly the Keokuk lecture-goers thought of oratory and eloquence in terms of the spread-eagle variety and envisioned an abolitionist as a man with satanic countenance. In their opinion the calm manner and the conversational style, for which, incidentally, Phillips was famous among orators of the period, did not conform with what they thought oratory should be. They were willing to concede that he was a "good talker," but they did not think him truly eloquent.

On March 15 Phillips journeyed to Des Moines on the Des Moines Valley Railroad, arriving at six p.m., just an hour and a half before the time of his scheduled appearance. <sup>12</sup> In an effort to avoid unpleasant bickering, the Lecture Association had invited Phillips to present "The Lost Arts," a perennial favorite which he had first delivered in 1838 and which he had repeated many times. In this lecture Phillips' objective was to improve his listeners by "knocking" out of them any "self-conceit" which had arisen from their undue pride in the accomplishments of their own age. He showed in his talk that the lost arts of the past had contributed much to modern living. Of course this lecture contained nothing to which anyone could object and it provided what many thought was culture, the goal of each lecture group.

<sup>10</sup> Fort Madison *Plain Dealer*, March 21, 1867.

<sup>11</sup> Keokuk *Gate City*, March 20, 1867.

<sup>12</sup> Des Moines *Iowa State Register*, March 15, 1867.

At the close of his announced lecture, someone asked him to speak a few words on "the live issues agitating the country." This request, giving him an opening, permitted him to lash out at the administration. Unfortunately, no report of what he said was made, but the reporter stated that the audience showed its approval by "enthusiastic applause." He further reported:

To attempt a description of the great Extremist of the right in speaking on the subject that calls forth the entire power and sublime eloquence of the champion of universal liberty, requires more room and time than we now have. Suffice to say, it showed to all who heard it that the name of Phillips is entitled to all the honor ever paid it. . . .<sup>13</sup>

The editor's rhetoric may have been an attempt to satisfy the admirers of Phillips and at the same time to avoid the publication of ideas which might have been resented by some of the readers of the paper.

From the financial point of view, Phillips' engagement proved indeed profitable for the Des Moines group. His lecture, the ninth and final one of the series, drew the largest crowd of the season.<sup>14</sup> After paying Phillips his fee of \$110, the Association earned a sufficient amount to pay a deficit and to finish the year with a small profit.

On the following night Phillips spoke under the sponsorship of the Mount Pleasant Young Men's Association.<sup>15</sup> For this audience Phillips attempted a double lecture, giving a portion of "The Lost Arts," and concluding with "The Perils of the Hour." He often resorted to this strategy when a committee was unable to decide whether it wanted a cultural discourse or a political discussion. He hoped, of course, to elicit a friendly hearing by the first in order that he might attempt to win converts by the second.<sup>16</sup> Phillips accomplished neither of these goals with his Mount Pleasant listeners. The *Journal* reported, "The vast audience congregated . . . to hear this distinguished Orator . . . manifested but little enthu-

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, March 16, 1867.

<sup>14</sup> The income from the several lectures was as follows: John G. Saxe, \$144.50; P. T. Barnum, \$192.50; President Magoun, \$22.00; B. S. McVickers, \$42.00; Clara Barton, \$105.00; Frederick Douglass, \$153.50; Judge Wright, \$9.00; Ralph Waldo Emerson, \$60.00; Wendell Phillips, \$265.00. *Ibid.*, April 20, 1867.

<sup>15</sup> Waldo W. Braden, "The Y. M. A. of Mount Pleasant," *The Palimpsest*, 29:76-86 (March, 1948).

<sup>16</sup> See essay by Edward Everett Hale, "Lectures and Lecturers," in Ashley H. Thorndike (ed.), *Modern Eloquence* (New York, 1923), 8:ix-xxii.



siasm. Numbers were half asleep. . . . Phillips is a dry, lifeless lecturer."<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless Phillips did draw a good crowd. Only Anna Dickinson and Frederick Douglass spoke to larger gatherings that year.<sup>18</sup>

A week later found Phillips delivering "The Perils of the Hour" under the auspices of the Dubuque Young Men's Library Association. Although the report on his speech said that he was "one of the first orators of the nation," it added with some qualification that he was "a radical to the degree of never being satisfied with any good that is, but always experimenting for an imaginary good." The writer concluded, "Mr. Phillips hates everybody, or if not hates certainly does not love anybody. He abuses the President to make more pointed his attack upon Grant."<sup>19</sup> As was often his custom, Phillips remained in Dubuque over Sunday in order to speak on temperance at the Universalist Church.

During the next three days Phillips traveled along the Dubuque and Sioux City Railroad, filling engagements at Independence, Waterloo, and Cedar Falls. At each of these places he repeated "The Perils of the Hour." The Independence *Buchanan County Bulletin* pointed out, concerning his appearance there, that those who came for oratory "doubtless went away disappointed. Instead, they saw . . . an intellectual giant, whose very presence, in its noble dignity, commanded respect, and whose words flowed forth in a golden stream from an inexhaustible fountain."<sup>20</sup> At Waterloo he drew "one of the best audiences of the season" in spite of a snowstorm which prevented the rural members from attending.<sup>21</sup> Again an observer thought "that the majority of the audience was much disappointed in Phillips," but the writer conceded that the lecturer was "much milder [than anticipated] and did not descend to that low abuse that many expected he would."<sup>22</sup>

At Cedar Falls Phillips apparently met a favorable reception. According

<sup>17</sup> Mount Pleasant *Journal*, March 22, 1867.

<sup>18</sup> The receipts for the lectures were as follows: Abbott, \$87.25; Dickinson, \$386.00; Tilton, \$81.25; Grace Greenwood, \$134.65; Douglass, \$306.00; Phillips, \$246.25; and Vincent, \$95.00. *Ibid.*, April 26, 1867.

<sup>19</sup> Dubuque *Herald*, March 24, 1867.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted by Hoeltje, "Notes on the History of Lecturing in Iowa," 90-91. The Independence correspondent for the Dubuque *Herald*, March 29, 1867, reported: "Phillips disappointed all his hearers, both in the matter and manner of his lecture."

<sup>21</sup> Waterloo *Courier*, March 28, 1867.

<sup>22</sup> Waterloo correspondent for the Dubuque *Herald*, April 3, 1867.

to the paper, he held the attention of a large audience for an hour and a half. Said the reporter, "His fierce denunciation of the 'weathercock' of the White House, the brainless 'Seward,' the wavering 'Beecher,' called forth united applause of his hearers. The severe criticism of General Grant's dangerous neutrality course, although just, was hard to swallow by the General's many friends."<sup>23</sup> Phillips proved to be one of the most popular lecturers of the season. Of the six persons whom the Cedar Falls Lecture Association sponsored that season, Phillips ranked second only to P. T. Barnum.<sup>24</sup>

At Cedar Rapids, March 29, Phillips once more attempted to deliver a double bill, dividing his time between "The Lost Arts" and "The Perils of the Hour." He met a response similar to that which he had encountered at Mount Pleasant. The *Cedar Valley Times* stated, "We confess that in common with many others we were disappointed. . . . There seemed to be something wanting — a skipping about from point to point, leaving the interstices incomplete and unsatisfactory, a hurrying through as if he had more to say in a given time. . . ."<sup>25</sup> The following night Phillips spoke at Clinton, probably en route to Illinois.<sup>26</sup>

Before going east Phillips returned to Iowa for three more engagements. On April 5, he spoke for the Library Association in Muscatine, where he previously had appeared as early as 1856.<sup>27</sup> For this occasion he varied his offering and gave a lecture called "Street Life in Europe," another of his time-tested efforts which he had prepared shortly after his return from Europe in 1842.<sup>28</sup> At the conclusion of his announced program he discussed in part "The Perils of the Hour."

As in other Iowa towns, the "majority of the audience" thought that Phillips had failed to live up to what they had anticipated in a radical orator. Paralleling other statements concerning him, the *Muscatine Journal* added that the listeners beheld "a wonderful exhibition of that energy of

<sup>23</sup> Cedar Falls *Gazette*, April 5, 1867.

<sup>24</sup> The proceeds from the various lectures were as follows: Barnum, \$234.50; Whiting, \$102.25; Tilton, \$142.70; Milburn, \$76.30; Emerson, \$62.85; and Phillips, \$177.70. *Ibid.*, April 5, 1867.

<sup>25</sup> Cedar Rapids *Cedar Valley Times*, April 4, 1867.

<sup>26</sup> DeWitt *Observer*, March 27, 1867.

<sup>27</sup> Hoeltje, "Notes on the History of Lecturing in Iowa," 73.

<sup>28</sup> Sears, *Wendell Phillips*, 94.

elocution which drives all before it" and they saw "an intellectual giant, conquering by the strong force of reason."<sup>29</sup> Phillips and Theodore Tilton were the only two lecturers of the season to attract a sufficient number to make a profit for the struggling Muscatine Library Association.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout the year Phillips challenged the policies of Johnson not only through his lectures but also by frequent editorials. While he was in Muscatine he outlined a three-point program of reconstruction in a letter to the New York *Anti-Slavery Standard*. This program, quoted below, is probably similar to what he had been presenting to Iowa audiences.

Our duty is to press constantly on the nation the absolute need of three things:

1. The exercise of the whole police power of the government to hold the South quiet while the seeds of republicanism get planted.
2. The constitutional amendment securing universal suffrage in spite of all state legislation.
3. A constitutional amendment authorizing Congress to establish schools in every state destitute of them at state expense.<sup>31</sup>

On Saturday, April 6, Phillips appeared at Washington, Iowa, again discussing "The Perils of the Hour." Once more he denounced Johnson and his program:

The necessary thing to be done is to impeach and remove the traitor from the White house [sic] who blocks the wheels of government. Men say that we are vindictive when we say this, they say we ought to be conciliatory. My friend Beecher says, he wishes the radicals would be "magnanimous," that we should "conciliate the South." I never heard any northern magnanimity that proposes to sacrifice any of its own rights! Beecher's magnanimity consists in sacrificing the negroes to conciliate the South, but it does not propose to sacrifice a shred of his own rights. . . . Beecher is willing to lay on the altar of Southern conciliation, the

<sup>29</sup> Muscatine *Journal*, April 6, 1867.

<sup>30</sup> Muscatine *Journal*, April 13, 1867, gives the fees paid each performer and the profit or loss incurred. These figures have been combined below to give the total amount received. In parentheses the fee is given. Abbott, \$30.50 (\$75); Barnum, \$99.00 (\$100); G. F. Magoun, \$15.50 (\$50); Clara Barton, \$26.95 (\$50); Vincent, \$44.25 (\$100); Gough, \$191.00 (\$200); Tilton, \$80.50 (\$75); and Phillips, \$209.45 (\$110).

<sup>31</sup> Letter dated April 5, 1867, bearing the heading, Muscatine. Reprinted in the *Dubuque Herald*, April 18, 1867.

negro, but he does not lay himself thereon. It is no time for conciliation; 1860 was the time for conciliation! We have marched over too many graves to yield any chances of reconciliation. I do not want to punish the President, I want his room. Dangerous to impeach the President! To be sure it is. Was there ever a battle that was not dangerous? . . . Let a united Congress, with the nationality of revolution behind it, impeach any man, and his power sinks collapsed that instant before the will of the people!<sup>32</sup>

Phillips' emotion-laden words and ideas, which summoned up pathetic reinforcement of the recent war hysteria, must have appealed to the people of Washington. The *Washington Press* praised Phillips without qualification. In fact, it was one of the few Iowa papers of 1867 to do so. The report said, "Phillips has no equal as an orator. How quiet he is! He simply talks to you but with a charm of thought, expression, and voice which will not let you sleep afterwards. . . . He is probably, however, not a favorite of the West. Western people ask for demonstration, like to have a man turn himself wrongside out on the stage, or at least, tear the lapels of his coat or split it down the back, as Rufus Choate often did in his fury." The same reporter went on to chide the neighboring Mount Pleasant paper for calling Phillips' lecture "dry." He thought that Phillips' poor showing in Mount Pleasant was due to the fact that "the citizens of the 'Athens of Iowa' " were "so unwise to 'mix liquors' [referring to Phillips' double bill]. We took ours 'straight' and got pleasantly 'set up' by the draught."<sup>33</sup>

Phillips' appearance on Saturday night in Washington gave him Sunday to travel to Iowa City for a Monday night engagement. He had hoped to hire someone to drive him overland to Iowa City. Unable to find a conveyance, and in the absence of a regularly scheduled train, he induced the local railroad officials to take him to Muscatine on a handcar. After getting an intimate view of the countryside between Washington and Muscatine, Phillips arrived in time to make his Iowa City connection. Nothing could be permitted to interfere with the lecturer's schedule.<sup>34</sup>

The *Iowa City Republican*, aware of what other Iowa papers had reported, warned the Iowa Citizens that Phillips would not deliver "a tearing, ranting discourse." Instead, it said, they would hear "a polished, calm,

<sup>32</sup> *Washington Press*, April 10, 1867.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, April 10, 1867.

<sup>34</sup> *Muscatine Journal*, April 8, 1867.



artistic eloquent presentation of the great and vital truths.”<sup>35</sup> The Democratic *State Press* gave Phillips a different type of advanced publicity. It urged its readers to remember “that up to 1860 he [Phillips] always repudiated the Constitution of the United States and refused to ever take an oath which required him . . . to support it. . . . We give him ovations and \$200 per night for telling us how he hated the old union and constitution.”<sup>36</sup>

Doubtless, the Republicans went to hear a calm presentation, while the Democrats attended to see how traitorous Phillips could be. Sponsored by the Iowa City Y.M.C.A., Phillips limited his remarks to the lecture “Street Life in Europe.” As usual the house was crowded. Only Frederick Douglass and Anna Dickinson had drawn larger crowds that season in Iowa City.<sup>37</sup>

The Republican paper showed little enthusiasm over Phillips’ talk, saying that it “met the expectations of the hearers generally. . . . His lecture was very entertaining and instructive. He, like most travellers in Europe, seemed to be enamored with traits of character which we think he failed to impress upon his hearers as desirable.”<sup>38</sup>

The other report of his lecture suggests that he did not confine himself entirely to his subject. The Democratic paper noted that “now and then” Phillips mixed into his development “a stray sentence upon the negro, again a whole paragraph on slavery, and so on.” The writer continued:

Wendell is a man of great mind, but upon the negro he is not sane. Did you ever spend a painful hour with a person of real brain whose reason was gone, or who was daft upon some particular theme, be it religion or what not? — If so have you not noticed how upon all subjects save the crazing one that the person might talk and talk well, but how the poor unbalanced mind seem[s] tethered to a post and doomed to travel in a circuit, ever and anon reaching the crazy part, as it ‘swung round the circle?’

Even so is it with Wendell. Upon Art, life, and manners . . . he can talk like an Archangel. Upon the negro and abstract polit-

<sup>35</sup> Iowa City *Republican*, April 3, 1867.

<sup>36</sup> Iowa City *State Press*, April 3, 1867.

<sup>37</sup> The Iowa City Y. M. C. A. netted the following upon their various numbers: Abbott, \$6.00; Barnum, \$95.00; Horace Greeley, \$65.00; Tilton, \$70.00; Gough (two lectures), \$250.00; Douglass, \$225.00; Phillips, \$129.00; Dickinson, \$260.00. This amounted to a total profit of \$1,100 on the eight lecturers. Iowa City *Republican*, April 17, 1867.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, April 10, 1867.



ical questions his is the silly patter of a fool or the insane rambling of a lunatic.<sup>39</sup>

The newspaper reports with one exception gave little indication of what Phillips thought of Iowa audiences or how he reacted to the press comment which he had received. The *Iowa City Republican*, the exception, revealed that Phillips was "greatly in love with the West. Its life, energy, rapid progress, independence and especially its radicalism" impressed him. Phillips noted that western audiences were "much less demonstrative than eastern," but they criticized "a speaker much more keenly" and demanded "of him much more action in his delivery."<sup>40</sup> Seemingly the lawyer-agitator had taken note that many Iowans found his oratory disappointing.

It is evident that Phillips' reputation as an agitator and the advance publicity that he received worked to his disadvantage before Iowa audiences. His thoughtful, conversational delivery did not conform to western tastes nor to what his listeners anticipated from an abolitionist. However, in each of his Iowa appearances Phillips proved to be a profitable venture for the sponsoring organizations. At each of his bookings he probably spoke to from three to five hundred persons, an attendance sufficient to provide a sum large enough to pay Phillips his fee and to make the sponsoring organization a profit. During a season when Iowa lecture associations were particularly fortunate in procuring famous and effective performers, Phillips ranked near the top in his ability to attract a crowd. Only Anna Dickinson, Frederick Douglass, P. T. Barnum, and John B. Gough attracted larger gatherings in some Iowa communities.

The reactions to Phillips' lectures during March and April, 1867, gave many important side lights on Iowa public opinion of 1867. Many program committees were eager to avoid alienating Iowa Democrats who were outspoken in their opposition to Phillips and to radical reconstruction. On the other hand, Republicans did not object to hearing Phillips advocate harsh reconstruction and the impeachment of Johnson, but they reacted negatively to his criticisms of their hero, General Grant. Phillips failed to discredit the Union general or to dim his prospects as a presidential hopeful.

<sup>39</sup> *Iowa City State Press*, April 10, 1867.

<sup>40</sup> *Iowa City Republican*, April 10, 1867.

## DOCUMENTS

### THE CIVIL WAR DIARY OF C. F. BOYD, FIFTEENTH IOWA INFANTRY

#### PART I

*Edited by Mildred Throne*

Recently the State Historical Society of Iowa has come into possession of an unusual Civil War diary. Because of its length, this document will be published in several issues of the JOURNAL, contrary to our practice of publishing only complete documents in each issue. The present installment covers the experiences of the author, Cyrus F. Boyd, from his enlistment at Indianola in October, 1861, through the terrible carnage of the Battle of Shiloh in April, 1862.

This is not a camp and battlefield diary of the usual order, with brief entries of only the high lights of the day. Instead, the author kept his notes, and after the war, in the peace and quiet of home, wrote them up in full. One of his closest friends was Daniel Embree, also of Indianola in Warren County. In 1896, when a resident of Ainsworth, Nebraska, Boyd sent a copy of his diary to his friend, Dan, with the note: "The enclosed copy from my Journal may be of interest to you as the years go by. I only give you in detail that part relating to the 15th and a brief [summary] of the 34th which contains just *one half* of all my daily notes." This diary remained in possession of the Embree family until 1951, when, on the death of Daniel's daughter, Bertha Embree Dodds, in California, it came into the hands of her attorney, Kuno Doerr of South Pasadena, California. At the suggestion of Mr. Doerr's nephew, Edward Doerr of Davenport, the diary was presented to the State Historical Society for preservation.

Cyrus F. Boyd was twenty-four years old at the time of his enlistment in Company G, Fifteenth Iowa Infantry; his friend, Daniel Embree, was twenty-one. Boyd served as First Sergeant in Company G of the Fifteenth Iowa until March 1, 1863, when he was discharged to accept a commission as First Lieutenant in Company B of the 34th Iowa Infantry. He was mustered out of service November 12, 1864. Embree served throughout his

term of enlistment in Company G of the 15th Iowa, being mustered in as Sixth Corporal; after successive promotions he was commissioned Second Lieutenant on March 7, 1863, First Lieutenant on August 27, 1864, and was mustered out on December 20, 1864.<sup>1</sup>

This diary is an extremely full account of soldiering in the Civil War, written from the point of view of an outspoken "citizen soldier" who did not hesitate to express his opinion of his comrades and officers, who described with frankness and many touches of humor the conditions of camp life and camp living, and who wrote, in simple, often startling language, descriptions of battles and their terrible aftermath that remind the reader of modern "realistic" writing. Much of the diary is not pleasant reading, but it is an honest, simple account of one man's experiences in a bloody civil conflict, and as such as worthy of preservation.

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#### DAILY JOURNAL

This book is compiled from the notes of several small memorandum carried in the pocket and which were kept from the date of my enlistment in the Army that was raised to put down the Great Rebellion of 1861.

The design being to keep a record of what was seen and experienced by myself during the trials of those bloody years which followed Very little in this Journal will be known to History as it shall be written here — as one's own province is quite limited in War, confined to the narrow bounds of a few companions and the little orbit in which he moves, Like a spoke in a great wheel moved by the motion of some great invisible power and not permitted to know why or wherefore he is expected to perform his part in the great work.

This will also aim to record the doings and the fate of many of my companions Having escaped the uncertain fates of War and lived to record my own part in the great struggle is sufficient satisfaction to warrant me in spending the time in consolidating the notes and memoranda which throughout the term of three years and four months was a *daily* duty I scarcely ever omitted even in the most unfavorable circumstances of making a note of all of interest that occurred [sic] around me along our tedious and perilous pathway

<sup>1</sup> *Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers in the War of the Rebellion . . .* (6 vols., Des Moines, 1908-1911), 2:911, 936; 5:271. (Hereafter listed as *Roster Iowa Soldiers*.)

A note book in my side pocket was like a pocket knife always at command on the march and a larger book in camp or in the baggage was written up at the first opportunity

During the Presidential campaign of 1860 several of us boys around Palmyra in Warren County Iowa, organized a company of young men just young and strong enough to do some tall yelling. We were mounted on horses. Our uniforms consisted of a pair of blue overalls — a white waist and a chip hat. The total cost of a uniform was about 85 cents. We each had a horse or rather a *colt*. We not only had to break and drill ourselves but had to break the *colts* also and at the same time. We were supposed to be assisting Abraham Lincoln to be elected President and everybody now knows that he was elected. We did not do him harm enough to prevent his election over Breckenridge and Douglas

Our Company was composed of about thirty boys all on farms in the immediate neighborhood. At the organization of the Company I was elected Captain. We carried a banner and on it was inscribed the following

“Lincoln Hamlin”

and

“Victory”

Above the banner and inserted in the flag staff were several little mauls and wedges. We attended all the Rallies in that County and some outside and when our man Lincoln called for men to suppress the insurrection we did not respond the first time but at the next call we left the *colts* at home and went almost to [a] boy.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Indianola Iowa*

Oct 15th, 1861. To-day I took my little squad of boys who are left of the Lincoln campaign to Indianola. We have made up our minds to enlist for the War. Times are dull at home and many have gone at the call of the President and joined the different Regiments from the State.

A long and lonesome Winter is coming on and the War may be over by spring and we should feel as if we had lost a great deal by not going and if

<sup>2</sup> Lincoln's first call for troops was on April 15, 1861; Iowa was requested to furnish one regiment, to serve for 100 days. Further calls for troops, for three-year enlistments, came on May 3 (answered by the 2nd through the 7th Iowa regiments), July 23 (8th through 13th Iowa regiments), and in October (14th through 17th Iowa regiments). Thus, it would appear that Boyd and his “boys” did not answer the *second*, but rather the *fourth* call of the President. Jacob A. Swisher, *Iowa in Times of War* (Iowa City, 1943), 77, 80-81.



the war should last longer we will have the credit of not waiting until we were pushed out Every one seems to be actuated by the purest and most patriotic motives and those who are going seem to be moved by a sense of duty.

I had a long talk with Dr Fisk.<sup>3</sup> He talks very strongly of enlisting, and thinks he can raise a Company if I will turn my squad in with him Lewis Todhunter saw me with Fisk and called me into his office and warned me to be careful about forming any alliance with Fisk. Said he that man Fisk was raised a "democrat" and he may betray you somewhere when you are in a tight place But few men have any confidence in him said Mr Todhunter and you had better keep your men well in hand as I am going to raise a company of *artillery* "they use cannon" and you can join my company and be 1st Lieutenant Right here my patience with Mr Todhunter oozed out and I plainly told him that of the two men I should choose Dr Fisk in preference — I told him I did not believe he intended to enlist and that I believed his only object was to discourage us from going so that he would have more company at home<sup>4</sup>

Fisk thinks if we cannot raise a Company here we can join some other squad to make out the number and has heard of a part of a company at Knoxville that is unable to complete its number of men He will go to Knoxville tonight on the stage to see about it

Oct 17th Fisk has returned and reports about 50 men at Knoxville who are anxious to have us join them We will go to-morrow in wagons

*Knoxville Iowa*

Oct 18th Bid the folks *good-bye* at Palmyra last eve and came to Indianola To-day we started in wagons for Knoxville some twenty of us Had a long hard days drive and arrived at the Judkins House late and got our suppers Bundy of Indianola came with us He is an intimate friend of Dr Fisk and is a jolly fat man to be with Have oysters after supper and Bundy

<sup>3</sup> Hezekiah Fisk was thirty-six years old in 1861; he was elected First Lieutenant of Company G, 15th Iowa; received various promotions; was captured at Shiloh; appointed Assistant Surgeon, March 7, 1863; died August 19, 1864, of wounds received at Atlanta. *Roster Iowa Soldiers*, 2:942.

<sup>4</sup> Cyrus Boyd was a man of very strong likes and dislikes, as will be shown in this diary. Lewis Todhunter was a prominent attorney of Indianola and had served in the constitutional convention of 1857 which re-wrote Iowa's constitution. During the Civil War he was an Assistant Quartermaster with the rank of Captain. Following Lee's surrender, he served as Post Quartermaster at Richmond, Virginia, until September, 1865. *History of Warren County, Iowa* . . . (Des Moines, 1879), 605-606.

stands the treat I was born too far from the sea shore so I do not take oysters Retired at 12 M

Oct 19th Got acquainted with several Knoxville men this morning Was introduced to a man named Wm T Cunningham<sup>5</sup> who they say will be Captain of the new Company I like his appearance very much He is a fine looking man and all speak well of him He is full of anecdotes and jokes and of very easy manners Is about 5 feet 10 in in height — sandy complexion and weighs about 175 lbs.

Was introduced to a man by the name of Hanks<sup>6</sup> who was in the Mexican War and who will probably be 1st Lieut. He is a thin wiry man with a prominent nose and of a very *confidential* turn He flattered me quite lively by saying that he had made a good deal of enquiry about me among the Indianola boys and also among their own men who had seen me and they all seemed anxious that I should be one of the commissioned officers of the new company He further said that Fisk wanted the place but that the Knoxville boys "did not like his ways" My reply was that I cared nothing about the Commission Was not going for honor or pay but would be willing to give way to any good man

A man by the name of Ethridge is talked of for one of the officers Met at the Court House after dinner — A large crowd was there with drums and music The crowd filed into the Court House and the meeting was called to order Proceeded to ballot for officers Wm T Cunningham was elected Captain without opposition R. L. Hanks and Dr Fisk were candidates for 1st Lieut Hanks was elected Fisk was elected 2d Lieut and all our squad were glad Now came the election of 1st or Orderly Sergeant David Myers<sup>7</sup> of Knoxville was mentioned and my name also It looked as if there would be a division about equal between the two sections of the two counties Myers having been a candidate for 2d Lieut and defeated came to me and proposed that we cast lots as to which of us should be the

<sup>5</sup> William T. Cunningham, born in Virginia, was thirty-six when appointed Captain, Company G, 15th Iowa. He was promoted to Major, Aug. 1, 1862; wounded at Corinth, Oct. 3, 1862; resigned at Memphis, Jan. 16, 1863. *Roster Iowa Soldiers*, 2:923.

<sup>6</sup> Romulus L. Hanks of Knoxville, a native of Kentucky, was thirty-nine years old at the time of his enlistment as First Lieutenant. He was promoted Captain Aug. 1, 1862, wounded slightly at Corinth on Oct. 3, 1862, and resigned Aug. 26, 1864. *Ibid.*, 2:958.

<sup>7</sup> David Myers, of Knoxville, native of Kentucky, age twenty-eight, transferred to Co. K, 15th Iowa, Feb. 18, 1862. *Ibid.*, 2:991.

Candidate while the other withdrew Having consented Myers proposed to throw up a *silver half dollar* He gave me choice and I said "tails" — as tails it would probably be *Tails* came up and here commenced my military troubles Was unanimously elected The captain congratulated me and also many of the men I think we have a good company

Oct 20th This is Sunday. Am staying at a Mr French's house with two or three of the boys All the people seem very kind and every house is open to us Attended church at the Presbyterian

Oct 21st Started in wagons for Eddyville this morning The day was wet and cold and the roads quite muddy The people of Knoxville cheered us and waved flags rags and handkerchiefs to us as we went out of town

Oct 22d We stoped at the Amos House in Eddyville last night or rather this morning having got lodging at Bellefontaine<sup>8</sup> some miles back on the Des Moines river The proprietor of the Amos is said to be a violent old "copper head" I am sure he must hate a Union soldier from quality of the fare he set out to us this morning.

#### *Keokuk Iowa*

Oct 23d This evening we arrived at Keokuk via the Des Moines Valley Railroad.<sup>9</sup> It was dark when we arrived at the Depot. We were taken off the cars like a drove of swine: the men yelling and cheering at the top of their voices We took up a random line of march through the City on and on until we are upon a high bluff outside the limits of the town and among some old board shanties or Barracks where we are told that we can lodge for the night Who brought us here I can not tell The wind howls fearfully and the air is frosty and bitter cold. We call this a little tough to commence

<sup>8</sup> Bellefontaine, in Scott Township, Mahaska County, was laid out in 1846; when the railroad built through the county in the 1870's it built a station at Tracy, in Marion County, about three-quarters of a mile away, thus ending the existence of Bellefontaine. *History of Mahaska County, Iowa . . .* (Des Moines, 1878), 533; John W. Wright and W. A. Young (eds.), *History of Marion County, Iowa . . .* (2 vols., Chicago, 1915), 1:181.

<sup>9</sup> The Des Moines Valley R. R., originally the Keokuk, Des Moines & Minnesota R. R., had been completed from Keokuk to Eddyville by 1860. The president of this railroad, Hugh T. Reid, was shortly to be appointed Colonel of the 15th Iowa, and, as such, would incur a good deal of Boyd's wrath—a not unusual dislike of the soldier for his commanding officer. For an account of the Des Moines Valley R. R., see Tacitus Hussey, "How the Des Moines Valley Railroad Came to Des Moines," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 8:125-34 (July, 1907). For Reid's part in the Civil War, see *Roster Iowa Soldiers*, 2:895; A. A. Stuart, *Iowa Colonels and Regiments . . .* (Des Moines, 1865), 281-8.



on We are told that this comfortable spot is a military Camp and named "Camp Halleck." I do not think much of Mr Halleck if this is a specimen of his Camp I do not wish any farther acquaintance with Mr Halleck

During the night some one brought us some blankets and with some old quilts and a Blanket apiece we got through until morning With husky voices and sore throats we looked around at dawn for something indicating a *change* The only change we met was a breakfast of Bakers bread a little fat bacon and some coffee made in some old rusty kettles The quenchless spirit of liberty which is supposed to exist in limited quantities in volunteers here began to develop and some of the boys began to think of their *mothers* and to talk of returning to their comfortable homes in the western counties This set the officers to working and they went down in the City and when they came back they informed us that we were to be moved to more comfortable quarters Here came in a great *cheer* and we left the Halleck Hotel for down town We marched down Main street by the "Estes House" the largest building I ever saw and take up our abode in a brick building on [the] opposite side of the street from the Estes House and on a corner diagonally across. The building has several large store rooms in it and under the Sign of Stannus and Co we commence to do business. I think we shall like Stannus and Co better than Mr Halleck. I suppose and hope that Halleck has nothing more to do with us. Our Room is 100 feet long and 25 feet wide The building is full of soldiers and two other companies are in the same room

Our Company is assigned to the 15th Iowa Regiment Volunteers and our Company will be Known as "G" Company Here we commence to have a name But what troubles us most is who shall feed us and wherewith shall we be clothed

Oct 24<sup>th</sup> Our fears are quieted as regards clothes. We have been required to throw away, give away or otherwise dispose of our citizens dress and we to-day drew from a Quarter-Master down on Johnston street a complete suit of Army blue The clothes we think are very nice and we are as proud as peacocks of our apperance [*sic*] How we pity those poor miserable fellows at home No new clothes because they will not go soldiering Here we are having lots of fun and glory

To-day we were *sworn* in the service of the United States for three years or during the war Almost every one thinks we will scarcely have a chance to see the enemy as the war will soon end But I guess the government



knows more on this subject that we do as it begins to look a little suspicious that we have been *sworn* in for at least three years. We may be going to see all we want to before the row is over But here goes for glory or for fun

The following Muster Roll will show the names and rank of our Company "G" as organized this date and recognized in the 15th Regiment<sup>10</sup>

*Muster Roll Co "G" 15th Iowa Infy.*

Cunningham Wm T	Capt	18. Davis John W	"
Hanks Romulus L	1st Lieut	19. Duncan John [James] W	"
Fisk Hezekiah	2d Lieut	20. Davis John G	"
Boyd C F	1st Sergt	21. Derry George W	"
Cathcart William	2d "	22. Embree W. C.	"
Gray Amos H	3d "	23. Edmonds William R	"
Welch Josiah M	4th "	24. Essex Hiram	"
Stanfield Joseph W	5th "	25. Eldridge Rufus R [H]	"
Clark Mathew	1st Corp	26. Elliott Elisha	"
Myers David	2d "	27. Essex Alexander	"
Hayes Nathan	3d "	28. Ford Oscar	"
Hockett Jefferson	4th "	29. Feagins Granville	"
Embree Daniel	6th "	30. Finn Carl	"
McNutt Oliver H	7th "	31. Fisher Daniel	"
Shepard Stiles F	8th "	32. Glenn Jesse [Jesse] V	"
1. Amon Joseph	Private	33. Glenn James W	"
2. Bunn David H	"	34. Gray, John F	"
3. Boothe John F	"	35. Hooten [Hooton] Henry	"
4. Bidgood William	"	36. Harger John	"
5. Brobst Albert	"	37. Hannan John	"
6. Bye E P	"	38. Heatley [Heatly] John	"
7. Beebout William H	"	[James B.]	"
8. Booth John W	"	39. James William W	"
9. Campbell William	"	40. Johnson Thomas J	"
10. Copeland Samuel	"	41. Judkins Miles	"
11. Carkins Marion	"	42. Kerr Levi	"
12. Crosby Albert N	"	43. Kitchell Wesley	"
13. Chapin James C	"	44. Lawhead Alfred	"
14. Cummins George B	"	45. Locker George W	"
15. Clark William C	"	46. Morris Harrison	"
16. Creswell Robert J [I]	"	47. Mart Marion	"
17. Clark John W	"	48. Metz Henry	"
		49. McNeil Alfred	"

<sup>10</sup> The spelling of the names has been checked with the roster of the company in *Roster Iowa Soldiers, 2:895-1055 passim*. Corrections are indicated in brackets. In the diary, no Fifth Corporal was listed.

50. McClure Robert M	"	64. Saunders John W	"
51. Metcalf Warren	"	65. Smith Samuel C	"
52. Mullen John	"	66. Stone Truman	"
53. Mayers John	"	67. Swaggart David [Daniel]	"
54. Mote William	"	68. Sanders Richard	"
55. McGilvery Alexander	"	69. Sherwood William T	"
56. Netherow David	"	70. Shoemaker Enos	"
57. Nichol[ls] Charles	"	71. Stalcop Mathias	"
58. Owen Henry	"	72. Webb Charles	"
59. Parker William	"	73. Webb John A	"
60. Rid[d]len Timothy	"	74. Welch James L	"
61. Reid Harvey M	"	75. Walker Charles	"
62. Shank Lewis W	"	76. Wyatt H. B.	"
63. Spencer Darwin	"		

Thus we stood at the time we were organized 31 of the Company came from Warren County and the balance from Marion County.

Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> The interval between dates herein has been occupied in company drill and the duties of Camp life which are monotonous enough Taken off the farms as the most of us have been and shut up in a pen as we are is enough to kill the best of us Measles and other diseases have reduced our numbers for drill almost one half and many of the men are sick<sup>11</sup>

We were *sworn* in again to-day by Captain Brown a United States Mustering Officer and now I guess we are *fast* enough We have no arms except a few old muskets which we use in the Manual of Arms up in a hall where the officers drill about three hours every forenoon The orderly sergts are permitted to drill with the Commissioned officers Capt Belknap of the City Guards drill[s] us He is a West Point Graduate and a splendid drill master, and a gentleman in every sense of the word.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Because of lack of adequate medical supplies, often simple diseases caused many deaths among the Union soldiers. Annie Turner Wittenmyer reported on the 15<sup>th</sup> Iowa in her report of Jan. 13, 1862: "The 15<sup>th</sup> regiment, now quartered in Keokuk, is suffering severely from measles. The Medical College has been fitted up for hospital purposes, and is pretty well arranged for the accommodation of the sick. There are now 73 in hospital, but most of them are convalescent. The supplies provided by Government being altogether too limited to meet the demands of the sick, the citizens and the Aid Society of this place have generously made up the deficiency. The hospital is visited daily by the ladies, with food and delicacies for the sick. . . ." Keokuk *Weekly Gate City*, Jan. 13, 1862.

<sup>12</sup> William W. Belknap of Keokuk, thirty-two at this time, was a native of New York. He rose rapidly in the service to the rank of Brigadier General in 1864 and

*Jany 15th, 1862* I have been up home and to Indianola Had a good time The girls all treated me well Brought back with me some recruits as follows:

Boyd Luther S	Cozad John W
Cozad John J	Kerr Thomas
Nichol[1]s William	Mote William
Posegate William [Posegate Francis]	Reid Elias
Safford Thomas	Roberts Samuel

Some of these boys will stand the service and some of them will not. All have to pass through a medical examination But the surgeons are not all particular as the government wants men and these Boys who want to go to war hide all the defects they can There seems to be a great surplus of men now offering and it looks like all that are mustered in now will be all that will be wanted

Brother Scott is determined to go and all I can say to him will not keep him at home Father, Mother, Mary and Jennie left at Home How lonesome it looks there Brother Matt enlisted in April in the 3d Regiment and he is South now The farm at home deserted by every boy in the family and no one but father to look after the stock and other cares Nearly all the boys in the neighborhood are gone *All* in fact who have any ambition in them The towns are almost deserted Every one is talking about the war and crowds throng the Post offices to get the last news.

*Feby 22d* The space between this and the last date has been passed without any particular change in quarters Many of the men are sick and there are too many of us crowded together in such a small space We were promised a Holiday upon this anniversary provided we appeared respectably at 10 Oclock in Dress Parade Before repairing to the Parade ground we formed in front of our quarters and marched to a nice piece of street on Main and Johnson The Regiment was broken into platoons and the Chap-

was brevetted Major General in 1865. Boyd's statement that he was a graduate of West Point is an error; Belknap had attended Princeton University and had studied law. In Keokuk, where he settled in 1853, he went into partnership with Ralph P. Lowe, future governor of Iowa. After the war Belknap served in Grant's cabinet as Secretary of War for seven years; in 1876 he resigned that post in disgrace, under accusations of official misconduct. He died in Washington in 1890 and is buried in the National Cemetery at Arlington. Benjamin F. Gue, *History of Iowa* . . . (4 vols., New York, 1903), 4:17-18. For Belknap's Civil War record, see *Roster Iowa Soldiers*, 2:895; Stuart, *Iowa Colonels and Regiments* . . ., 289-94.

lain Mr Estabrook<sup>13</sup> an Episcopalian and Lieut Colonel Wm Dewey<sup>14</sup> got upon a stand prepared for the purpose The attention of the Regiment was asked and the Chaplain said the farewell address of Washington would be read The men were called to a "rest" and the Chaplain offered a prayer — or rather read one — Then followed the reading of the address After this Lieut Col Dewey introduced Hugh T Reid by saying "Boys behold your Colonel" and we *beheld* him The announcement was followed by deafening cheers In a brief speech the Col addressed the Regiment and complimented the men upon their appearance and highly eulogized their conduct since they have been in Keokuk and urged all to follow the noble conduct of the Iowa Regiments that have gone before us. Three cheers were given for Major Belknap who seems to be a favorite — and for the Country Then we marched back to our quarters. . . .

Took dinner and went to the Hospital and saw our sick men Mote and Hooten are very sick and the former will have a hard time to get well The Hospital looks bad for want of proper care The sick are mostly of old and chronic cases of disease I shall not get sick if it can be avoided as I have a holy horror of a Hospital As I came back met some young ladies of recent acquaintance and also saw two drunk men who seemed a little too patriotic for the good of the service They have imbibed too much of the *spirit* of 76 which seems to be kept in any quantities in the numerous saloons

Corp David Myers and myself went out shooting awhile Attended Dress Parade at 5 oclock Had 56 men out Every man has to go who can walk It is my duty as Orderly Sergt to know whether he can walk or not. I have

<sup>13</sup> William W. Estabrook served as Chaplain of the 15th Iowa until 1863 when he resigned. In May of 1864 he was appointed Surgeon of the 45th Iowa, a "one hundred days" regiment, and was mustered out September 16, 1864. *Roster Iowa Soldiers*, 2:896; 5:1289.

<sup>14</sup> William Dewey of Sidney, Iowa, a native of Massachusetts, was fifty at the time of his appointment as Lt. Col. of the 15th Iowa. He proved extremely unpopular with the men of the regiment, as will be shown by Boyd's criticisms, and in August, 1862, was transferred to the 23rd Iowa as Colonel; he died in November of that year at Patterson, Mo. Dewey had attended West Point, although he had not been graduated from that institution, and had also studied law and medicine. Captain James G. Day of Co. I, 15th Iowa, later said of him: "He was . . . too irascible and excitable to command respect, or to become a successful leader"; while A. A. Stuart wrote: "He was strict and exacting in his discipline, which did not accord with the democratic notions of his men." James G. Day, "The Fifteenth Iowa at Shiloh," *War Sketches and Incidents . . . Iowa Commandery, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States* (2 vols., Des Moines, 1893), 2:176; Stuart, *Iowa Colonels and Regiments . . .*, 382. See also *Roster Iowa Soldiers*, 2:895; 3:685.



to call the Roll at breakfast, at dinner and at 8 oclock P M Have to take every man who complains of sickness to Surgeons Call at 9 AM and if excused by the Surgeon he is "off duty" for that day only unless sent to the hospital

Mud deep and growing deeper Uniforms in bad plight — feet wet and cold and patriotism down to zero. After dusk I took a walk up town in the immediate neighborhood of the Catholic Church and stayed until 12 o'clock M As I came back met a drunk soldier on the high side walk near the Church He made a mis-slip and rolled off and down the clay bank clear to the bottom of the gutter I did not stop to enquire if he got his clothes soiled or not. I think the next morning will show that they were not only soiled but *subsoiled* I heard a grave voice at the bottom swearing that it would be "a brick house and forty dollars in money" whatever that may mean Arrived safely at Camp and with the Pass word passed the guard and fell into my bunk

*Feby 23d Sunday* — The weather is quite warm and damp and the Miss River is beginning to thaw some. Had men in line at 10 AM for Company Inspection This is ordered by Army Regulations Every man must have on his complete uniform except overcoat We have no Arms yet. Only a dozen old muskets for guard duty Company is formed — we open ranks Front rank about faces and at the word of command every man deposits his knapsack on the ground in front of him and opens it for the Inspection of the Captain If a mans clothes are dirty and the articles not properly packed he is reprimanded publicly and told how not to do so next time

The men mostly attended church to-day. I attended Congregational and heard the Rev Mr Thatcher Attended Sunday School at the Exchange M. E. Church and had an interesting time The congregation looked well and I like the place The people are very sociable — especially the young ladies who seem to take a great interest in the soldiers Went to the Hospital in afternoon and visited our sick men Mote and Overton are very sick

*Feby 24th* Weather cold and disagreeable This forenoon attended officers drill in the large Hall in the Estes House Major Belknap drilled us. All the commissioned officers and the sargts are required to be there promptly Major Belknap is a large lusty and fine looking man and seems to know what he is doing as he puts us through without any resting for about one hour and one half Had Battalion drill in the afternoon Had Dress Parade

and thence to supper Sergt Tom Hedrick and I went out calling this eve Called on the Miss Graham's and Miss Lizzie Wiggins and then went up to the Rev Mr Hardeys the ME Minister and spent a pleasant hour

*Feby 25th* It has been warm enough to-day to leave an overcoat most any place and forget where you put it. Called Roll at Reveille 6 A M Two or three men were in their bunks and did not come out They were slapped on *Extra* duty Went to Post office and detailed guard 1 man on guard, 1 on Police, 1 sergt and 1 man on general guard and 3 men on local police Had Company drill with 64 men out. Our Company now numbers 99 men

Was at Hospital this after noon The sick are getting along as well as we can expect There are many cases of suffering there Some with the Rheumatism seem to be the worst off — for they are completely helpless and suffer great pain Some are used up by the measles and are very low — A young boy who came from Warren County and who enlisted in Co "K" died last night, and this eve another man died from effects of measles.

Went over to Mrs Conrads and saw Dan Embree who has the measles. He has a comfortable place and a good Room — a good bed — good music and seems to enjoy having the measles more than any other one whom I have seen with that disease I almost wish I had postponed having the measles when quite small

Last night the men had high old times running from the Patrol guard Some of them were caught and are now in the "guard house" for several hours or days as the case may be Some of them are getting pretty old at the business of running the guard The Patrol has to do some good running to overtake these night fellows The patrol sometimes find men away from Camp two miles in saloons and disreputable houses There are some bad men in Co's "A & H"

Our Regimental officers are as follows

Hugh T Reid	Colonel
William Dewey	Lieut Colonel
William W. Belknap	Major
George Pomutz	Adjutant
Mortimer A Higley	Qr Master
Jesse Penniman	Sergt Major
William W. Estabrook	Chaplain

*Feby 26th* Weather mild Have been busy all day. We spend a good deal of time drilling This evening attended a social at a Mr Vails. Waited

on Miss Lizzie Sullivan home Fell down twice going back to camp The streets are terribly rough

*Feb'y 27th* Snow storm this morning Took tea at Mrs Conrad's and heard some good music Dan Embree still lingers there His supply of measles is holding out well Helped Tom Safford and Cummins to the Hospital to-day Tom is the clown of the Company He will not die as long as there is any show for *fun* above ground but is not worth a cent for any other purpose

*Feb'y 28th* Weather cool and streets muddy Had Company drill in forenoon and Battalion drill in the afternoon The officers have boarded with the Company ever since we came here in our quarters until of late They now board out in town on 3d street. Hanks wants me to go up to his boarding place and see the *girls* there He says they are about *right*

Brother Scott has been very sick all day. Spent the evening in quarters A rumor came to-day that 3000 rebels are in the vicinity of Athens a little town up the Des Moines river and some men came down from there to get a cannon for the defence of the place — but I have learned that Camp is no place for *facts* The River still remains closed and no prospect of its opening We are watching the ice with no little anxiety as we expect to leave here [as] soon as boats can run The Spring will open with a vigorous prosecution of the war and we shall be shoved to the front

*March 1st* To-day the weather has been drizzling and the sky clouded Have not been so busy as usual Ten men sick in Company to-day Found men all improving at hospital Called on the Miss Johnstons<sup>15</sup> this evening Had a good social time This is w[h]ere Capt and Lieut Hanks board To night was awful dark I knew because I was out

*March 2d Sunday.* We had rain, snow and a general amalgamation of the elements. Attended Church at the Exchange and Sunday School in afternoon

*March 3d* Weather extremely cold and windy. More snow to-day This afternoon have been writing out Discharges for several men who will be sent home They are sick and already played out The well one's have been dancing about all day to the music of two or three violins Got up at midnight last night and let a sick man have my bunk in the little back room where Capt and Lieut sleep

<sup>15</sup> In 1865 Boyd, then a resident of Des Moines, married Miss Maggie Johnston of Keokuk. *Indianola Weekly Banner*, March 16, 1865.



*March 4th* Weather cold and windy. We tried bat[talion] drill this afternoon but it was so cold we did not remain out long. Went to a social this evening with Miss Maggie Johnston at a Mr Pattersons on Bank and 7th streets. We had a good time and came back about 12 M.

*March 5th* Did not drill any to-day too cold and windy. 14 men off duty to-day in our Company and 2 not expected to live. A member of the Company by the name of Locker was arrested for letting things stick to his fingers. Capt found a revolver upon him which he lost some time ago. Locker was sent to the Guard House.

*March 6th* Very Muddy. Went down to the shooting gallery with Lieuts Hanks and Fisk and beat them both shooting at a target 30 yards. Have dress parade as usual every evening. At Parade this eve there was presented to the view of the Reg't the flag of the 2d Iowa which was carried over the defences of Fort Donelson which place was captured a few days ago with a great number of prisoners. The flag was held up by a wounded soldier of the 2d. The sight called forth a great cheer from all the men. There was a large quantity of the arms captured at Donelson sent here for exhibition — such as old muskets, Arkansaw "tooth-picks" &c. Also some fragments of a shell which exploded in the gun boat Essex and killed 30 men. . . .<sup>16</sup>

*March 8th* The River is thawing and there is a good prospect of its opening soon. Called at the Johnston residence this evening and spent an hour very pleasantly — also visited an hour at Mrs Hanfords in same way.

*March 9th Sunday* — I attended Unitarian Church to-day and heard Rev Mr Whitney preach. His subject was the War and its Cause. It was a good sermon. He said that human slavery was the Cause and we should have no lasting peace until the Curse was wiped out. Took dinner at Mr Johnstons and had a pleasant stay afterwards. Remained in quarters this eve and wrote some letters.

*March 10th* Weather beautiful. Had Bat. drill. Major Belknap commanded the left wing to which our Co belongs. Tie Shephard and *me self* went up to see the Sullivan family (only a part of it) this evening. Lizzies family are full blooded Irish and the old gent[?]s nose turns up just like a

<sup>16</sup> For an account of the part played by the 2nd Iowa at Fort Donelson, see Mildred Throne (ed.), "The Civil War Diary of John Mackley," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY*, 48:163-4 (April, 1950). An "Arkansas toothpick" was a knife similar to a bowie knife. Mitford M. Matthews (ed.), *A Dictionary of Americanisms* . . . (2 vols., Chicago, 1951), 1:42.



true son of Cork The old lady is a clever sly little woman and very shy Lizzie is a fast talker and her eyes are sparkling black and as sharp as any Irish girl She has an independent air which makes her entertaining and she does not seem to care whether School keeps or not In our rambles we did not reach camp until about 12 oclock We saw the patrol guard chasing some fellow down 5th street and up Johnston and finaly [sic] caught him He was taken to the guard house there to suffer the penalty of his crime.

*March 11th* Fine weather just now and the River thawing rapidly I want this river to thaw out and again I do *not* We are drilling in foot maneuvers

*March 12th* Gloriously cold and windy News came to-day that the Rebs have evacuated Manassas. Gen Curtis has whipped the combined forces of Price, Van Dorn and McIntosh at Pea Ridge in Arkansas.<sup>17</sup> Our troops seem to be gaining signal victories every place Almost every one thinks the war will end soon

Dave Myers and I called at Mr Johnstons this eve It looks a little as if I was going to Mr Johnstons rather often Some of the up town girls have made the above remark in my *hearing* lately They may be correct

*March 13th* Weather cloudy with high wind The River commenced breaking up this afternoon and the ice is piling up in large islands on the bars and shallow places The main guard having been taken off for a few days was again put on duty to-day. There was considerable profane language used about it by the men

This evening *Sergt* Dave Myers (recently promoted from Corporal) took Miss Aggie and I escorted Miss Maggie Johnston to call on a Miss Ella Creel who lives on 7th Street. While we were there it commenced to rain and when we came back the pavements were in a terribly slippery condition When we got back to quarters the guard halted us — and we continued to halt The guard remained silent and we enquired what *next* Not answering we asked him if he wanted the countersign and he said he *believed* he did We advanced and whispered in his *dirty ear* "Pea Ridge" He than had presence of mind enough to tell us to Pass on This fellow was perhaps on guard for the first time But it was not the first time *out* for us

<sup>17</sup> General Samuel Ryan Curtis of Keokuk, first Colonel of the 2nd Iowa, had been placed in command of the District of Southwest Missouri in December, 1861. For an account of the battle of Pea Ridge, which cleared Arkansas of Confederate troops, see Stuart, *Iowa Colonels and Regiments* . . ., 38-44.

*March 14th* Weather cool Ice almost all gone out of the River at this place, and the water is rising fast Last night a hard rain fell Rumor says that we shall leave soon for the South. I hope we will for it is getting too muddy and many of the men are getting sick Our quarters are crowded and damp. 14 men off duty today in Co

*March 15th* Weather cloudy and damp. The ice is gathering in large drifts below town The gorge rests at Alexandria Have been busy all day getting Company concerns ready to leave. We are drawing clothing and complete equipments except arms Took supper with Tie Shepard at the "Wiggins House" by special invitation of Miss Lizzie W.

*March 16th* Sunday Weather beautiful Went to Exchange to Church and [heard] "Uncle" John Cozad preach He is past 50 years of age. Is a full blooded "democrat" and came with me from Indianola He had to resort to strategy to get in the service He had his hair colored black — held his head up and looked like a boy under age — and ran the gauntlet of Inspection and was sworn in Company "G" as a private soldier<sup>18</sup> He wants to go principally [sic] because his son John has enlisted in our Company at the age of 17 and he is an only child and the poor old man cannot bear to have him go alone so he goes along to look after him Went to Sunday School in the afternoon and saw several of the young ladies In the evening attended church at the O. S. P. with Miss Maggie J.

*March 17th* Everybody is excited We received orders to prepare to leave Keokuk To draw three days rations and to be ready at a moments notice to embark. Destination unknown Extra Cooks were detailed and things are being hurried on This afternoon some of us went around and bid good-bye to some of our lady friends Perhaps we will have to do this over again as the prospect this evening is that we shall not go for some days yet But then if we should remain awhile it will not hurt us much to — as we should just as soon see some of them again as not Went to a Concert this eve and took a lady friend

*March 18th* Weather cloudy and wet. If certain boats come up tonight we shall leave to-morrow Have been very busy all day This afternoon we

<sup>18</sup> According to the army records, John J. Cozad of Indianola was forty-four years old at the time of his enlistment, but he had been born in Ohio in 1812, which indicates that the age he gave the mustering officer was incorrect by some six years. He had been rejected by the 10th Iowa, but had succeeded in being accepted by the 15th. He served until Feb., 1863, when he was discharged for "general disability." *Roster Iowa Soldiers*, 2:175, 922; *History of Warren County* . . ., 620.

marched with Knapsacks on We find that we shall have a mules load to carry — 2 blankets, extra clothing and a big overcoat, haversack &c saying nothing about a gun and ammunition

Tie Shepard and I took tea with Miss Lizzie Sullivan Miss Hart was there and we had a good time Never were men treated so well as we have been by the good people of Keokuk They have all seemed to study the interests and the happiness of the soldiers and have provided every comfort that can be imagined They have used us too well and we will suffer for it when we leave here Came past the Miss Grahams and bid them *good-bye* The Johnston girls gave us some ginger snaps and I have my haversack full of provisions

*Miss River — on board the "Jennie Deans"*

*March 19th* This morning our quarters presented a busy scene Many of the men were up at 3 o'clock getting ready to fly from this old Nest The boat "Jennie Deans" came up and we were to leave at 3 PM Two or three of us took dinner with the Johnston girls Maggie and Aggie We had a good dinner and a pleasant time not unmarred however by the ever present thought that this might be the *last* time we should meet these kind people With many kind wishes for our safety and welfare we bid them *good-bye* When we returned to Quarters we found the men ready to march to the landing and with one last lingering look at the old bunks we bid them a final and last farewell

The rain was falling in torrents as we marched down Main street But notwithstanding this all the side walks were crowded with people All the windows were full of women and children waving flags and handkerchiefs The sick boys at the Hospital looked out from their bunks to cast a glance at the long line of blue with its glistening knapsacks with its steady march to the music by the bands of "Dixies Land" 1000 strong we marched that afternoon in the pride and glory of youthful soldiers The sound of the music — the cheering shouts of the people robbed [us] of all regrets and we marched proudly away. I saw some of our good friends on the side walks — but it would not do to look back We were marched on board the "Jennie Deans" and crowded like cattle into every conceivable corner No man unless he wears shoulder straps can enter the cabin When the boat left shore thousands of people stood upon the wharf and cheer after cheer arose as we turned to the South and glided into the stream

The whole face of the River was covered with cakes of ice As darkness



came on many of the men went below and found room to lie down I found a sheltered place near one of the chimnies on the upper deck and spread my blanket and slept soundly for about two hours when the cold wind awakened me and I got up and not seeing any guard at the cabin door I crept in and laid down on the floor

*"Benton Barracks" St Louis*

*March 20th* Got up at 5 oclock this morning Soon after daylight we passed Alton Ills and by 9 AM we were at the landing in St Louis among a perfect mass of steam boats which lay along the shore as far as the eye could reach We were ordered to land and soon were on the march to Benton Barracks, which is four or five miles out. The streets were muddy and slippery and many weak men gave out on this our first march We were kept on the double quick most of the time and most of us were gone up when we got to the Barracks. After two hours standing and stumbling around our officers apportioned each Company its place in the barracks. The quarters are comfortable and convenient and the boys have so far recovered as to have a *dance* to-night The people cheered us from almost every house as we came out and waved flags and rags Now we shall learn something of the Art of War

*March 21st* Snowed about all day and melted as fast as it fell making it awful muddy A battery of art[illery] arrived to-day from Camp Denison Ohio consisting of six field pieces and 136 men Capt P Gad Bryan of the 1st Iowa Cav arrived here to-day on his way to his Regiment.

*March 22d* This has been a cool and windy day until evening when the sun came out and dried some of the mud. Many of the troops located here were out drilling this afternoon But the 15th did nothing in that line 17th Wisconsin came in to-day all armed and equipped [*sic*] — they march well and looked splendidly The 16th Iowa came in from Dubuque last night, 1000 strong

I took a ramble around the barracks to-day to see some of the preparations making for the organization of the Western Army The Headquarters of this encampment consists of a large three story building — frame and built square and a large flag floats over the house The soldiers barracks extend on either side in compact one story frame buildings and string out about one mile in length on either side of the drill grounds leaving a beautiful piece of ground half a mile in width All the quarters front on this parade ground Back of these buildings are the kitchens and out houses.



Water is conducted through pipes and can be drawn in any of the Kitchens Underground drains carry off all the refuse water The water for the supply comes from the Miss river Long lines of stables extend back of the Kitchens These are occupied by the Cavalry Here we can begin to see — and to have some idea of the preparations being made to prosecute this War

Saw the 14th Wis Infantry encamped on the Fair grounds in bell — or Sibley tents<sup>19</sup> — They are a fine collection of Men They are packing up this eve preparatory to leaving as also the 23 Mo I saw 33 pieces of Art. to-day Rumor says we shall be sent to New Mexico It takes 136 men for camp guard around the Barracks The who[le] thing is surrounded by a high board fence and Cavalry outside of that

*March 23d Sunday* Weather cool and some snow fell. There was some movements of troops to-day. Another battery came in last night. There was preaching at the fair grounds to-day but I did not find it out in time to go. There was a great parade of troops There seems to be no Sunday here There seems to be no God here but more than the average amount of Devil Saw a Cavalryman thrown from his horse and badly hurt. One man had his neck broken yesterday

*March 24th* This has been a fine day and we have improved it by drilling A number of the 17th Wis got drunk to-day and the officers had a great time to manage them News comes of a severe battle at Winchester Va in which our side was victorious

Men selling "bullet proof" vests were in camp to-day The boys say our Capt purchased one They submitted some for trial about one half of them were bored through by musket balls They sold for \$8.00 to \$16.00 If the bullet did not go through it would knock a man into the middle of next week so that he might as well be killed first as last

*March 25th* Weather clear and fine Have been busy all day drilling Lieut Fisk has been appointed Asst Surgeon of the Reg't and will be away from the Co most of the time We just begin to like him. His eyes are very

<sup>19</sup> The Sibley tent, named for its inventor, "was a cone sixteen feet in diameter at the base, supported by a center pole with an iron tripod foot. The top of the pole supported an iron ring one foot in diameter over which was draped a conical cape which was raised for ventilation and to let out the smoke. Sixteen men occupied each of these tents and slept as radii of the circle with their feet toward the center, where a fire could be built when necessary. . . ." Fred Albert Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army, 1861-1865* (2 vols., Cleveland, 1928), 1:200.

sore and he can scarcely see anything Our officers all seem very kind The 65th Ills Infantry went down the River to-day — also one troop of Cavalry.

*March 26th* Weather clear warm and fine I have to travel one mile to deliver my morning Report and half a mile to Surgeons Call with all the sick who are able to walk and same distance to Post Office This afternoon we drew our Arms — they are Springfield Rifle Muskets and are a most beautiful weapon — they are bright and in fine condition We brought them with all the accouterments to camp and distributed them and every man will be held responsible for everything he drew These guns are effective at from 500 to 800 yards and load with cartridge minnie ball Received to-day by each Company one wagon and six mules to haul Company baggage.

*March 27th* Weather warmest of the season Have all been attacked with spring-fever or symptoms to that effect. Have drilled in the manual of Arms to-day and here we show our greenness [sic] Received a letter from Home The scenes around these old barracks are becoming so common that we want another change

*March 28th* Weather warm and we had a fine little thunder shower this afternoon — 11th Ills Cav left to-day for some unknown destination We received *Marching orders* this evening On hearing this the men cheered for about half an hour so anxious are they to go The order was announced on dress parade

*March 29th* A good day for spring fever and it took hold of a good many. Have been busy all day preparing to leave for the South This eve the 15th Mich came in tired, dirty and used up The Regt numbers about 900 and are armed with Austrian muskets a very clumsy looking Gun

*March 30th Sunday* The air to-day has been refreshingly cool and the sky clear and the sun shone out brightly There is Sunday in the almanac but in military affairs there seems to be no sacred day All is work. The men are playing cards swearing and dancing just as on other days. This I do not enjoy How uncomfortable it makes me to be thus surrounded on Sunday Through the week I can get along very well Men that four months ago would not use a profane word can now outswear many others and those who would even shun a checker board now play cards for profit The descent looks gradual from the top but how fast they seem to go as everything seems to hurry on the downward grade If the war should last a year or two how degraded some of these men will become How eager they seem to abandon all their early teachings and to catch up with everything which

tends to debase To-day each Company has been cooking rations for the trip ahead Officers have been making Muster Rolls

*March 31st* Have been very busy all day Expect to start to-morrow morning

*"Toward Dixies Land" Steamer Minnehaha*

*April 1st* We arose at 4 O'clock and expected to leave at 7 O'clock — but we did not get off until 11 A M Our Regiment with the 16th Iowa, 23d Missouri and 15th Mich came down together to the landing — all armed and equipped with the bands all playing They looked fine and gay indeed We went aboard the steamboat "Minnehaha" and after two hours of tedious waiting started down the stream toward "Dixies" land The other boats did not start when we did We had aboard also two Batteries and all the horses belonging thereto and our Regimental wagons

The "Minnehaha" is an old shaky tub and is very large Every available place and corner is crowded — Around the boilers the men are packed like swine We ran aground this evening and the shock brought everything up *standing* and frightened many of the men for a moment After the boat got off she ran a short distance and threw out her anchor close to an Island I shall sleep just in the rear of one of the wheel houses in a little spot marked out by my knapsack and gun &c

*April 2d* This morning about 4 O'clock the steamer again started and kept bravely on her course down the river We have made our first attack upon "*hard tack*" this morning and think we shall like it We have bid farewell to Bakers bread, cows milk and such soft things. Had a piece of meat and a hard tack for breakfast — we are gradually breaking in The scenery along the river is very picturesque and beautiful especially on the Ills side High rocky cliffs covered with Cedar in many places There is always a contrast when one side is rough and hilly the other side will be flat and swampy

This afternoon we stop[p]ed at Cape Girardeau on the Mo side The town is situated on steep and high hills On the summit of the highest hill in the town is a large fort made of earth from which a piece of artillery was fired as we came almost opposite and then our boat rounded to and came to landing We remained only a few minutes Saw a few soldiers on shore. There seems to be quite a number of pieces of artillery here The town is built mostly of brick The wind being high the waves splashed upon the deck and frightened the mules and horses



This afternoon one of the rudder ropes broke and we drifted for some time with the current At 5 o'clock PM we came in sight of Cairo lying at the mouth of the Ohio river On the West side of the Miss is Birds Point a somewhat noted place of late It is a low flat piece of land and seems to be covered with timber Cairo lies in a low muddy piece of ground just at the junction of the Ohio and Miss rivers and is a most forbidding looking place The levee hides from river view the most of the town. Some of the houses stand in water to the first windows — the inmates living in the upper stories They have small Canoes and paddle from one house to the other No "swinging on the gates" allowed here A long line of Boats lie along the Ohio wharf. I think the principal productions of Cairo are tad-poles and ague "Fort Holt" lies on the Kentucky side among the heavy timber which hides from view the adjacent country — Distance from St Louis 180 miles Sixteenth Iowa came down this eve. Weather clear & warm

*April 3d* Went on shore and made some coffee this morning — which never tasted so good — and it cheered us up Left Cairo at 8 O'clock Kept up the Ohio and most of the time close to the Kentucky shore Passed a beautiful little village almost hid among the newly budding trees and green blue grass The people cheered loudly as we passed On the North or Ills side the country is rough and on the other side the opposite while the high water is flooding the low lands.

At 5 O'clock we came to Paducah Kentucky — a mean dirty looking town with its low black brick walls and old smoky buildings — lying just at the junction of the Tennessee river and on the west bank Here are plenty of soldiers and several boat loads of old muskets and spoils of war brought down from Donelson and Henry<sup>20</sup> The river bank is lined with soldiers and dirty greasy negroes We have tied up at the shore and will remain here until morning Paducah is a *secession* town and came near being taken by General Simon Buckner at one time but the vigilance of Gen. Grant seemed the point which is of great importance About 8000 troops are here

*April 4th* To-day we have been at anchor expecting every moment to leave but did not get away until 4 PM We left with other boats and all the bands playing "Dixies" Land Here we enter the dark land of secession and the enemies home Kentucky professes to be *neutral* which means that she leans heavily toward secession She takes this ground only to save her own

<sup>20</sup> The battles of Forts Henry and Donelson had taken place on February 6 and 15, 1862.



*bide* — but she will strike us a blow soon as she thinks we cannot strike back Met the Gunboat "Cairo" a formidable looking vessel — she carries 12 heavy guns — some of them 68 pounders

*April 5th* Last night we traveled until 11 o'clock and a storm coming on we hauled into shore and remained until 4 o'clock this morning The rain drove the men below and we were desperately crowded for room. Passed Fort Henry about 4 o'clock The fort is occupied by a small garrison Fort Donelson is a short distance away on the Cumberland river — Henry seems to have been a strong place for Riflemen but could not stand the fire of heavy art. from the gunboats which produced such a panic among the "secesh" that they retired to Fort Donelson where they were all taken in by Genl Grant

#### *Battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing*<sup>21</sup>

*April 6th Sunday* — At 6 o'clock we arrived at a point known as "Pittsburg Landing" on the West bank of the Tenn river where seems to be concentrated all the western troops that are destined to invade the Confederacy by way of the Mississippi Valley This place is 240 miles from the mouth of the Tennessee river At 7 o'clock we ate breakfast on board the

<sup>21</sup> In the Battle of Shiloh, or Pittsburg Landing, the 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 8th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th Iowa Regiments took part. Colonel Wm. T. Shaw of the 14th called it "Iowa's great battle of the Rebellion." See Wm. T. Shaw, "The Battle of Shiloh," *War Sketches and Incidents* . . . , 1:183-4. Much has been written about the battle of Shiloh; endless controversy resulted as to whether Grant was caught napping when the Confederate army, under the command of General Albert Sidney Johnston, moved out of Corinth and attacked suddenly on the morning of April 6. For Grant's own account, see *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant* (2 vols., New York, 1885), 1:330-70. Some other accounts are: Joseph W. Rich, *The Battle of Shiloh* (Iowa City, 1911); Henry Stone, "The Battle of Shiloh," and Ephraim C. Dawes, "The Battle of Shiloh," in *Campaigns in Kentucky and Tennessee* . . . (Vol. VII of *Papers of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts*, Boston, 1908), 33-202; D. C. Buell, "Shiloh Reviewed," *Century Magazine*, 31:749-81 (March, 1886); S. H. M. Byers, *Iowa in War Times* (Des Moines, 1888), 122-45; S. D. Thompson, *Recollections with the Third Iowa Regiment* (Cincinnati, 1864), 206-256; Clinton Parkhurst, "A Few Martial Memories [of the 16th Iowa at Shiloh]," *The Palimpsest*, 1:111-28 (October, 1920); Henry Steele Commager (ed.), *The Blue and the Gray* . . . (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1950), 1:351-5; Otto Eischenschiml and Ralph Newman, *The American Iliad* . . . (Indianapolis, 1947), 168-203; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* . . . , Series I, Vol. X, Parts I and II, *passim*. (Hereafter referred to as *Official Records*). Pittsburg was a steamboat landing on the Tennessee River in southern Tennessee near the Mississippi border. The battle fought there became known later as "Shiloh" because of Shiloh Church, two miles southwest of the Landing, where General W. T. Sherman's headquarters were located.

Minnehaha at which time we could hear the noise of *cannon*<sup>22</sup> About 9 O'clock brother Matt of the 3d Iowa came in. I of course was glad to see him His regiment has been out on the front some days. He looks hearty and well

About this time rumor came that the Rebel General Beauregard<sup>23</sup> with a large force has attacked our Pickets who are being driven back. The men of the 3d say it does not mean anything as the firing is of daily occurrence and is only the pickets At 9 o'clock the wounded began to come in and there begins to be a great stir on the shore Officers and cavalry riding in all directions The roar of the cannon can be distinctly heard some miles to the South

At 10 o'clock we are ordered ashore with all our equipments including 40 rounds of ammunition<sup>24</sup> With our knapsacks haversacks canteen (and almost every one had an extra suit of clothes) and our overcoats — haversacks filled to the top with hard tack and last but not least each of us had a big high hat with a large brass "eagle" on the side. If we were not a choice looking lot of fighting cocks as we stood in line that morning then I am no guesser We formed in line on the Bluff overlooking the river — We were in great confusion as Col Reid and Dewey galloped back and forth without seeming to know exactly what they were doing Col Dewey did a consider-

<sup>22</sup> The battle had been joined in earnest between 5 and 6 o'clock in the morning against the Sixth Division, under command of General B. M. Prentiss. Colonel Reid of the 15th, in his report later, wrote: ". . . the Fifteenth Regiment of Iowa Volunteer Infantry from Benton Barracks arrived at Pittsburg on Sunday morning, with orders from General Grant's headquarters to report to General Prentiss. Finding that his headquarters were some 4 miles from the Landing, I proceeded at once to report to him in person, and found a heavy fire of artillery and musketry already commenced along his lines. Orders were received from his aide to bring up my command as soon as possible, and I returned to the river for that purpose." *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. X, Part I, 278, 288.

<sup>23</sup> General A. S. Johnston, in command of the Confederate forces, was killed in the early afternoon of April 6 and his place taken by General P. G. T. Beauregard. For descriptions of Johnston's death, see Eisenschiml and Newman, *American Iliad* . . ., 186; William Preston Johnson, "Albert Sidney Johnston and the Shiloh Campaign," *Century Magazine*, 29:621 (February, 1885); Joseph W. Rich, "The Death of General Albert Sidney Johnston on the Battlefield of Shiloh," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 16:275-81 (April, 1918).

<sup>24</sup> "The regiment was rapidly disembarked, ammunition was distributed, and the men for the first time loaded their guns," reported Colonel Reid. Thus, green troops who had only received their rifles some ten days before (March 26) were thrown into one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. X, Part I, 288.

able amount of hard *swearing* and I had time to notice him wheel his horse around and take some *consolation* through the neck of a pint bottle. This seemed to give him a stronger flow of swear language than before. When we had got into something like a line we were presented with several boxes of ammunition and each man ordered to fill up to the extent of 100 rounds. By this time we were loaded down to the "guards"

The wounded men were by this time coming in freely and were being carried right through our ranks. And we could see hundreds of soldiers running through the woods. Col Reid got us started. Who gave the order I know not. Who our guide was I knew not. We started on the double quick in the direction of the heavy firing which was mostly of musketry. The field officers were mounted on horses and we tried to keep up with them and to do it we had to *run* and then the front (for the Regt was marching by the right flank) would halt and the rear would telescope into them. Thus we kept on for at least three miles meeting hundreds — yes thousands of men on the retreat who had thrown away their arms and were rushing toward the Landing — most of these were *batless* and had nothing on them except their clothes. Some of them were wounded and covered with blood from head to foot. Some of the wounded were being carried on stretchers. The woods were full of Infantry, cavalry, Artillery and all arms of the service were flying toward the River in countless numbers. Men yelled as they passed us "Don't go out there" "You'll catch hell" "We are all cut to pieces" "We are whipped" Some declared they were the only one's left out of a whole Regiment or a Battery as the case may be.

There was also Infantry officers with swords drawn and trying to head off the flying troops and make them halt. There was Cavalrymen galloping after men and threatening to shoot them if they did not stop. But I saw no one stop — But on we went facing all these discouraging circumstances to take our turn at failure to stop the Rebel tide which was coming in like a wave of the sea unresisted and irresistible.

Here we were a new Regt which had never until this morning heard an enemies gun fire thrown into this *bell* of battle — without warning. The hot sun and the dreadful load we had carried through three miles of dust and battle smoke had so exhausted us that there was no strength left in the men. On the bluff we have put the first cartridges into our guns and [that] added to the scenes through which we had just passed was enough to unnerve the best troops in the world. But we were *green* and went in and not a man was



seen to halt or to falter Lieut Fisk had been in a dark state room all the trip on account of his eyes — but when we formed at the landing he came off the boat and in full uniform insisted on going into the fight. He wanted to take his place as Lieut. Several of us earnestly tried to persuade him to stay out but he would not listen to us and go he did. He was almost blind and followed us to the field

The roar of the artillery and the crash of the musketry was close at hand We came to the edge of a large field and as we crossed a little Ravine the bullets and a few shells passed over us making some of us dodge Here we deployed by the right flank to come into line of battle but did not get that accomplished until we were out in the open field and in fair view of the enemy. A heavy shower of bullets riddled the ranks and threw us into some *more* confusion and being jamed into masses we were in poor shape to return the fire — some were wounded and a few killed before we could come to a front. Here I noticed the first man shot. He belonged in Co “K” Capt Hedricks Co [John M. Hedrick, of Ottumwa] He was close to us and sprang high in the air and gave one groan and fell *dead* Our Company had to pass over him and each man as he came up seemed to hesitate and some made a motion to pick him up — but the officers sternly ordered them “forward” The men all gave a cheer and rushed on in line of battle with bayonets fixed

The enemy lay in ambush at the farther side of the field We at first could not see them only the puffs of white smoke came from the thickets and brush and every log and tree. We reached some scattering trees and [as] if by common consent we made for those and it was fun to see two or three fellows running for the same tree. In the smoke and confusion I saw the flag advancing on our right and running across an open space I made for a small sapling not more than six or eight inches through. When I got there two other fellows were there too and Jeff Hocket was one of them Jeff gave me a tremendous *butt* and sent me out of shelter and displaced me so that the tree was of no use to me We all three laughed and the other fellow and I started for another tree and kept shooting toward the enemy I found a very good place behind a good sized log just to the left with Co “B” and had some good shots from there in the direction of the enemy but could not see them for the smoke There was a little Ravine where Co “B” was working and this protected us from grape and cannister which was being opened in the Regiment from the timber in our front It was every man for himself



We knew nothing about orders or officers. Indeed the Companies now became all mixed up and without organization<sup>25</sup>

Col Reid was wounded and fell from his horse with a bullet wound in the neck — Lieut Col Dewey I notice sitting behind a tree holding the halter to his horse which seemed to be badly wounded. Major Belknap was wounded and also Adjt Pomutz. Sergt Major Penniman had been killed. The wounded and the dead lay thickly on the ground.

Lieut Rogers of Co "E" had the flag and bore it manfully ahead of all. He made one stand behind the upturned roots of an old tree. A heavy fire seemed to be concentrated on the flag and men fell thick all around that spot. The enemy opened on us with artillery at close range using grape, canister and shell and all manner of deadly missiles. Above the roar of the guns could be heard the cheers of our men as they gained new ground. At last we could see the enemy and they were advancing around our left flank and the woods seemed alive with *gray coats* and their victorious cheer and unearthly yells and the concentrated fire which they had upon us caused somebody to give the order for *retreat*. The word was passed along — and we went off that bloody ground in great confusion and had to fall back over the same open ground by which we came<sup>26</sup>

As we started down the Ravine a wounded rebel caught me by the leg as I was passing and looking up at me said My friend for God's sake give me a *drink* of water. He had been shot about the head and was covered with blood to his feet. I at once thought of that command "If thine enemy thirst give him drink" and I halted and tried to get my canteen from under my accouterments — but I could not and pulled away from him and said "I

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Hickenlooper, an Ohio officer, wrote: "There were no battle plans, no strategy, no tactical maneuvers and but few commands—certainly none that had any important bearing upon the final results. It was under such conditions that these men—many of whom had never before heard a hostile gun fired—were suddenly aroused and hastily formed in line, without food, without water or even without an adequate supply of ammunition, and were moved forward until suddenly confronted by the regiments of a vigorously pressing and determined foe." Eisenschiml and Newman, *American Iliad* . . ., 203.

<sup>26</sup> "While I admit that after fighting nearly two hours in a regiment 'as green as a gourd,' and losing on the field nearly two hundred gallant men, killed and wounded, I with all others in sight left with some celerity for a more healthy spot; yet we had plenty of company from other regiments and commands, and as far as I saw, the fact that officers of rank were separated from their commands was the rule and not exception. . . ." William W. Belknap, "The Obedience and Courage of the Private Soldier . . ." *War Sketches and Incidents* . . ., 1:160.

have not time to help you" (I had business other places just about that time as the Regt was ahead of me) And on we went making as good time as we ever made over that old field

The bullets seemed to fill the air and to be clipping every little weed and bush and blade of grass around us Many men lost their *bats* and their guns — The tall gov't hats with the glorious old "eagle" lay thick on the ground and the knapsacks and haversacks and last winters overcoats were too numerous to mention

In the meantime (and just about as *mean a time* as I have ever met) the enemies Cavalry came dashing around on our right flank (as we retreated) and followed us almost to the ravine where we made a temporary stand and with a few shots the Cav fell back Here Jeff Hocket ran to me and said that my brother Scott had given out and was lying upon the ground some distance back. I ran to him and tried to get him upon his feet But he said I should go on as he never could go any farther and that I had better save myself and let him go. I told him the enemy were almost upon him and that he would be taken prisoner or killed No words of mine seemed to have any effect I now took him by the *nap of the neck* and jerked him upon his feet and told him to *come* or I should help him with my *boot* At this he stood up and I managed to work him along down the ravine and left him to rally on the hill. The men kept on to the rear and were fast filling up the great stream of *fugitives* from the battle field

Cavalrymen were riding in all directions with drawn sabers and revolvers threatening to shoot and "Cut mens heads off" if they did not stop and rally Officers were coaxing praying and exhorting men for "God's sake" to stop and all make a stand together But in most cases their orders and appeals were not heard by these demoralized men who kept going like a flock of sheep All the terrors of hell would not have stoped them until they got to the River Hundreds lay in the woods on the ground completely overcome with the heat smoke and dust and fatigue The heat seemed intense The air was filled with dense smoke and fumes from burning powder took all the moisture from the mouth and a *burning dryness* extended to the throat

Riderless horses came thundering through the woods with empty saddles and artillery horses with caisons [*sic*] attached ran through the squads of men and striking trees caused the percussion shells to explode blowing horses caisons and everything around to atoms Cannon balls were flying in

all directions cutting off great limbs of trees and many men were killed and injured in this way as the heavy limbs fell on them Every indication seemed to point to a great and *terrible defeat* There seemed to be only a few who thought we were not *whipped*

At this time about 2 o'clock in the afternoon the remains of several Regiments concentrated with our squad under command of Capt Kittle Co "A" with some Ohio Wis and Indiana troops we went forward again toward the line of battle which seemed to have advanced some distance Our Reg flag was carried by Sergt Rogers We kept advancing and falling back as the enemy pressed forward or gave way under heavy fire from troops on our left Our men dragged some heavy guns back of us and the whole line of Infantry fell back and massed around the Artillery

About this time some prisoners brought in say that Albert Sidney Johnston commanding the Rebel army was killed this afternoon and that Beauregard is now in command and has sworn to "water his horse in the Tennessee River or in *hell* before night"

About 5 o'clock the enemy came on in solid masses for the final *charge* At this time there was a calm The artillery and the musketry almost ceased and the calmness was *oppressive* But it was the calm before the terrible *storm* which was preparing We were massed upon the surrounding bluffs about the landing General Grant and Genl Buell rode along the line and urged every man to stand *firm* as we should have thousands of reenforcements in a short time and pointed to the opposite side of the river where we could see a long line of blue coats far as the eye could reach — and that was *Buell's Army* *This sight was all that saved Grants Army*<sup>27</sup> No prom-

<sup>27</sup> Maj. Gen. Don Carlos Buell, in command of the Army of the Ohio, had been ordered from Columbia, Tenn., to join Grant at Savannah, a few miles up the river from Pittsburg Landing. He had arrived there with his first division on the evening of April 5, the other divisions following at 6-mile intervals. By the evening of April 6 his Army had been moved up to Pittsburg Landing. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. X, Part I, 291-2; Buell, "Shiloh Reviewed," 751-2. Jesse Bowen Young, a Union soldier, also drew inspiration from the sight of Buell's army: "Late in the afternoon I noticed a commotion on the other side of the river. Transports were there waiting for something or somebody. As I watched the spot, I saw a squad of men appear in sight on that side of the river. Then came a general and staff, and then on a run a regiment with its battle flags floating gaily in the air. They quickly embarked on transports and in a short time were on the Pittsburg Landing shore. I could hardly believe my eyes as I saw the advance guard and realized that Buell's troops had come to the rescue of the Army of the Tennessee. The arriving troops cheered and were cheered in return. . . ." Eisenschiml and Newman, *American Iliad* . . ., 191.



ises or words could have inspired men on this desperate occasion Every man who stood in that crumbling wall felt the great responsibility. To give way then would be *destruction* to the whole Army

There is some talk now that the enemy having lost their leader is retreating and that the battle is over for to-day which is the reason for the silence But this delusion is soon dissipated as the smoke clears away we can see the enemy coming on in long dark lines and seem to spring out of the ground in countless thousands This is to be the grand and final charge by which they hope to sweep us from the face of the earth or capture the entire army This *death like stillness* is worse than *murder* Our Artillery opens with about 40 pieces (all we have left) then nothing more can be seen

The very earth trembles with the fearful explosions The enemy charged to the very mouth of our cannon and hundreds of them fell — filled with whiskey and gun powder The battle raged for the possession of this hill which we held If we would have lost this *all would have been lost* Every man seemed nerved beyond human strength to do his utmost and he *did*. Acres of dead and wounded told the fearful tale of sacrifice.

At this time two gunboats moved up the River and opened on the flank of the enemy such terrific noises were never before heard in these dismal woods.<sup>28</sup> The rapidity of the discharges and the roar of the guns seemed to mow the very forest to the ground This so demoralized the Rebels that they fell back about dark At this time a grand stampede took place at the Landing

Thousands of men who had fled from the field tried to get aboard the steamboats which lay at the bank The Boats were ordered to leave and fall over to the other bank of the River The crazy fugitives from behind crowded those in front and hundreds were pushed into the River and scores

<sup>28</sup> "At a late hour in the afternoon a desperate effort was made by the enemy to turn our left and get possession of the Landing, transports, &c. This point was guarded by the gunboats Tyler and Lexington, Captains Gwin and Shirk, U. S. Navy, commanding, four 20-pounder Parrott guns and a battery of rifled guns. As there is a deep and impassable ravine for artillery or cavalry, and very difficult for infantry, at this point, no troops were stationed here, except the necessary artillerists and a small infantry force for their support. Just at this moment the advance of Major-General Buell's column (a part of the division under General Nelson) arrived, the two generals named both being present. An advance was immediately made upon the point of attack and the enemy soon driven back. In this repulse much is due to the presence of the gunboats Tyler and Lexington, and their able commanders, Captains Gwin and Shirk." Report of U. S. Grant, April 9, 1862, *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. X, Part I, 109.



drowned The cannon balls from the enemies batteries now passed over our heads and clear across the River, so close were they to us Darkness and the gunboats determined our persistent foe to fall back and thus at dark we found ourselves crowded like a flock of sheep on the bluffs around the Landing just able to keep the Wolf at bay while the favoring night that settled down on friend and foe put an end to the fearful slaughter for the day a parallel to which this Continent had never before witnessed

*Battle of Shiloh or Pittsburgh Landing Second Day's Battle*

*April 7th* No pen can tell, no hand can paint no words can utter the horrors of last night. Such a doleful pressure of misery and woe and suffering as rested on this field of *death* Unable to succor or help the poor wounded men that fell in yesterdays battle the living cared only for themselves Scarcely able to endure the great fatigue of the day each one cared only for himself

The enemy held undisputed possession of the greater portion of the field where lay the badly wounded About 10 o'clock at night the thick smoke in the air gathered in thunder clouds lit up by flashes of lightning and rolling thunder — and soon the rain began to come down in torrents drenching both man and beast<sup>29</sup> There was no shelter any place Piles of provisions and ammunition lay uncovered. The darkness was impenetrable except when the lightning flashed

The groans of the *wounded* and *dying* could be heard in the din of the tempest The struggles of the wounded horses as they floundered upon the ground and came running through the darkness made the situation one of almost as much danger as during the day in the battle. Signal lights were flashing on the river all night as the boats kept constantly running back and forth bringing Buells Army across which yesterday marched thirty miles to

<sup>29</sup> Grant himself wrote of this night: "During the night rain fell in torrents and our troops were exposed to the storm without shelter. I made my headquarters under a tree a few hundred yards back from the river bank. My ankle was so much swollen from the fall of my horse the Friday night preceding, and the bruise was so painful, that I could get no rest. The drenching rain would have precluded the possibility of sleep without this additional cause. Some time after midnight, growing restive under the storm and the continuous pain, I moved back to the log-house under the bank. This had been taken as a hospital, and all night wounded men were being brought in, their wounds dressed, a leg or an arm amputated as the case might require, and everything being done to save life or alleviate suffering. The sight was more unendurable than encountering the enemy's fire, and I returned to my tree in the rain." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:349.

be here at the fight which was impending As the poor tired fellows came up from the landing they gave a *shout* and a *cheer* and yelled "Never mind boys We'll *lick hell* out of them to-morrow" Such a welcome shout made us feel new again But [we] thought of the fearful morrow and would it be possible to redeem the terrible losses of to-day.

It took all night to get that army of 30,000 men across the Tennessee Before dawn this mighty Army of reenforcements was in line of battle. Before the darkness had lifted from the deep forest we heard the roll of musketry and the shouts of Buells men far to the front — at first the scattering shots of the pickets then the increasing crash of the small arms followed by the roar of the cannon and the cheers of the contending hosts as they grappled in the death struggle for the old field of yesterday About 10 oclock our scattered Regiment got together about 400 men and we marched out toward the front and took our place in the reserve in line of battle near where we fought on yesterday Here we lay more as a Reserve than anything else

Buells Army to-day is doing the *fighting* The cannonading at this time was *terrific* and on until in the afternoon. Batteries were *taken* and *retaken*. Sometimes one side held the ground then the other would rally and recapture it, and the roll of the musketry from 60,000 guns intermixed with the noise of the cannon and the bursting shells made the earth tremble with the concussion — as the two giants grappled in the final struggle for the victory. This desperate fighting lasted about 4 hours Acres and acres of timber such as small saplings and large underbrush were mowed down and trees one foot in diameter were cut down as if a mowing machine had gone through the field and limbs fell like autumn leaves in the leaden and iron storm. Men and horses were piled in death over hundreds of acres on the fatal field<sup>30</sup>

*At last! At last!* About 3 oclock there was precipitate haste to the front and the fire seemed to slacken and the volleys of musketry were getting more distant toward the South Soon the glad news came that the enemy was *retreating* No shipwrecked sailors on a desert island famished and ready to die ever hailed a passing vessel with more delight and joy than every one on the Union side hailed that glad news. Men mortally wounded

<sup>30</sup> For Buell's own account of this day's battle, see Buell, "Shiloh Reviewed," 775-9; *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. X, Part I, 293-5.

jumped upon their feet and shouted for *Victory* Every coward who had slunk under the river bank was out of his hole There had not been so many men *wanting* to go to the front since the battle began The woods were full of Cavalry hunting the *front* They had heard that the enemy was "retreating" and they wanted to give him some of their ammunition

Two or three of us took a little ramble out on the field and we perhaps went one mile or more from the Regt. We took a look at the ghastly sights By this time we had become accustomed to seeing *dead* men and the *shock* had passed We soon came to where the dead lay thick The first dead rebel I came to lay on his back with his hands raised above his head and had died in great agony I took a *button* from his coat Here was the camp of the 52d Ills Federal and Confederate lay alternately scattered over the ground some of them wounded and so near dead from exposure that they were mostly insane

Farther on the dead and wounded became more numerous Some had died in a quiet and peaceful manner and had passed away with no visible sign of pain or suffering Others wore the most fearful signs of agony as they had struggled with death Some fell with their muskets tightly gripped in both hands so that they could scarcely be separated I saw five *dead* Confederates all killed by one six pound solid shot — no doubt from one of our cannon They had been behind a log and all in a row The ball had raked them as they crouched behind the log (no doubt firing at our men) One of them had his *head* taken off One had been struck at the right shoulder and his chest lay open. One had been cut in two at the bowels and nothing held the carcass together but the spine. One had been hit at the thighs and the legs were torn from the body. The fifth and last one was piled up into a mass of skull, arms, some toes and the remains of a butternut suit. Just a few feet from where they lay the cannon ball had struck a large tree and lodged. I took it out and carried it some distance but finally threw it down as it became too heavy a relic to carry.

I saw one Union man leaning against a tree with a violin tightly grasped in his left hand. He had been dead some time and had no doubt been instantly killed Another close by was leaning against a tree with his hat pulled down over his eyes and his hands crossed in front of him. I thought him asleep but when I took his hat off I found him cold and *dead*. This was in the camp of Genl Prentiss who was on the extreme front and where our men were first surprised yesterday morning I saw where the 3d Iowa



and some other regiments fought yesterday there has been the most terrible destruction I counted 26 dead battery horses on a few square rods of ground and the men were lying almost in heaps Blue and gray sleep together<sup>81</sup> Oh my God! Can there be anything in the *future* that *compensates* for this slaughter Only Thou knowest

Around these batteries men have died at their posts beside the guns Some are torn all to pieces leaving nothing but their heads or their boots Pieces of clothing and *strings of flesh* hang on the limbs of the trees around them — and the faithful horses have died *in the harness* right by the cannon. Some of them torn to quarters by the bursting shells and their swollen bodies are already filling the air with a deadly odor.

While here some cavalry came dashing back and yelled that the enemy was coming on us again in force The way we climbed toward the Regiment was not very *slow* But we lost our course and the sky being clouded we could not tell directions The woods were full of men running in all directions and we were in the flood of a *great panic* Some said the River was in one direction and others said it was the *opposite* We crawled into a *thicket* and waited until we got a little better settled in our minds about the *direction* Finally we got the course and went on until we [saw] some of our Regiment<sup>32</sup>

The enemy has retreated and left all his dead and wounded on the field We have whipped him but at an awful *sacrifice* The two armies are like two tenacious *bull dogs*. They have grappled and fought until both are exhausted and worn out. One has crawled away to *lie down* and the other

<sup>81</sup> Grant visited the battlefield on this day, also. "Shiloh was the severest battle fought at the West during the war, and but few in the East equalled it for hard, determined fighting. I saw an open field, in our possession on the second day, over which the Confederates had made repeated charges the day before, so covered with dead that it would have been possible to walk across the clearing, in any direction, stepping on dead bodies, without a foot touching the ground." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:355-6.

<sup>32</sup> Lt. S. D. Thompson of the 3rd Iowa reported that this was a ruse to get the soldiers off the field: ". . . whole regiments scattered into squads and scattered over the field in search of their dead and wounded; and it was not long before the entire field was covered with stragglers and plunderers of the dead. To put a stop to this, the Cavalry was ordered to get up a panic among them. They rode frantically over the field, circulating the report that the enemy's cavalry was upon them. The effect was admirable. In a few minutes the panic communicated itself to all parts of the field, and stragglers without number poured through the woods toward the river like a herd of frightened brutes. No one could tell what he was running from. . . ." Thompson, *Recollections with the Third Iowa*, 241.



one cannot follow. This is our condition We are quite glad to hold the ground and let him retreat

Ambulances and men are hurrying over the field and gathering up the wounded The surgeons are *cutting* off the arms and legs Burying parties and details are out burying the dead this evening who have been dead now since Sunday Morning The air is already filled with the stench of decaying bodies. The battle field is one vast forest with here and there an old field The soil is poor and clayey and some of the ground swampy and some rolling covered with briers and thick underbrush

The terrible rain of last night has filled the ground with water and washed the gullies out The trees are just bursting into leaf and the little flowers are covering the ground — but their fragrance is lost in the pall of death which has settled down on this bloody field

*"This is the valley and the shadow of death"*

*(To be continued)*

## HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

### *The State Historical Society of Iowa*

Superintendent William J. Petersen was one of fourteen Iowans who took part in the shakedown cruise of the *U. S. S. Iowa*, from California to Pearl Harbor, on November 18 to 30, 1951.

The Society has received some valuable acquisitions within recent months. Donald Ashton, executive assistant of the Burlington Lines, presented the Society with a three-volume *Documentary History* of the Burlington Railroad, prepared under the direction of W. W. Baldwin. Dale A. Howard loaned the Society for microfilming the journals kept by his grandfather, Paine Howard, from 1860 to 1902. These daybooks contain a record of the weather as well as day-to-day jottings on farm activities through the years. Mrs. V. R. Seeburger of Des Moines loaned the Society for copying seven Civil War letters of W. P. Marvin, written during 1862 and 1863. Several scrapbooks and record books of the WCTU of Oelwein have been presented to the Society by M. L. Gee of West Union.

The Radio-Television Service of Iowa State College, in conjunction with the Society, prepared a film of the Amana Tour which was released on WOI-TV at Ames on October 18, 1951. The Davenport and Omaha television stations plan to show the film at a later date.

Dr. Kenneth F. Millsap, research assistant of the Society, spoke to the Woman's Club at Fairfield on November 14, 1951. His subject was "Dramatic Episodes in Iowa History." Dr. Millsap also spoke before the Rotary Club at Bloomfield on December 10.

#### SUPERINTENDENT'S CALENDAR

October 15-16	Attended meeting of Society of American Archivists at Annapolis, Maryland.
October 18	On WOI-TV live program in connection with showing of Society's Amana Tour film.
November 8	Addressed Colonial Dames of America at Iowa City.
November 18-30	On shakedown cruise of battleship <i>Iowa</i> .

December 4	Interviewed over KXIC, Iowa City, on work of State Historical Society.
December 18	Discussed Hawaiian Cruise on KXIC, Iowa City.
December 20	Addressed Iowa City Rotary Program.
December 28-30	Attended annual meeting of American Historical Association in New York City.

The following members were elected to membership in the State Historical Society during the months of October, November, and December:

*Adair*

Roy W. Foss

*Algona*

E. A. Genrich

*Altoona*

Dan C. Newquist

*Ames*

Edwin William Peterson

*Anamosa*

Mrs. Bess E. Sherman

*Batavia*

Mrs. Raymond Kneer

*Bettendorf*

Chas. F. Scherer

*Blakesburg*

Asa G. Berry

*Brayton*

Miss Anna A. Runge

*Britt*

Carl Frick

*Burlington*Des Moines County Public  
Schools

C. J. Kramer

*Carlisle*

Mrs. Blanche Lanning

*Cedar Falls*

V. W. Johnson

*Cedar Rapids*

Mrs. Kenneth L. Butler

Miss Florence M. Fulton

Miss Martha E. Griffith

J. C. Kennedy

McKinley High School

J. H. Ramsey

*Centerville*

Mrs. Edward L. Simmons

*Clarinda*

Clarence E. Reynolds

Mrs. Clay Swisher

*Clear Lake*

Dr. M. L. Knutson

*Colo*

Consolidated Schools

*Columbus City*

Miss Mary J. Yohe

*Corning*

W. J. Frederick

Miss Maude M. Friman

*Council Bluffs*

Miss Genevieve B. Coble

*Davenport*

Kermit Clingman

Mrs. L. W. Kimberly

Floyd L. Link

A. O. Lothringer

Hugh R. Norman	<i>Fort Dodge</i>
Arthur Wagner	Mrs. Otto Glesne
<i>Des Moines</i>	Miss Hazel H. Stotts
Theodore Aulmann	<i>Garnavillo</i>
Frank Burns	Mrs. Lucille Hockett
A. B. Chambers	<i>Glenwood</i>
Marvin R. Davidson	Mrs. Homer C. Daniel
Mrs. H. Haeberle	<i>Glidden</i>
Dr. Henry G. Harmon	Mrs. Mabel Montgomery
M. J. Heartney	<i>Goldfield</i>
Henry Adam Howell	Mrs. Ole Tjelle
Fredric Lattner	<i>Grimes</i>
H. S. Loughran	Merton T. Straight
E. T. Meredith, Jr.	<i>Grinnell</i>
Miss Nellie I. Miller	Rev. Judson E. Fiebiger
M. D. Mills	<i>Grundy Center</i>
Mrs. Margie Purmort	A. J. McMartin
Roger U. Ries	<i>Harlan</i>
Charles L. Roberts	F. E. Brouhard
Hugo Schnabel	<i>Hartley</i>
Mrs. John D. Shuler	Miss Esther R. Borak
Mrs. Lloyd D. Starks	Independent School District
Mrs. Glaydis Lamb Thomson	<i>Humboldt</i>
James W. Wallace	Rev. Robert J. Watson
<i>Diagonal</i>	<i>Independence</i>
High School	T. E. Howes
<i>Dickens</i>	<i>Indianola</i>
Lake Twp. Cons. School	Gerard Schultz
<i>Dike</i>	<i>Iowa City</i>
Paul E. Sires	Mrs. Fred L. Clark
<i>Dolliver</i>	Mrs. Kenneth B. Donelson
Consolidated School	Mrs. Max Elder
<i>Donnellson</i>	Mrs. Bertha M. Keller
Independent School	Edwin B. Kurtz
<i>Eldon</i>	Mrs. C. S. Meardon
W. J. Picken	Mrs. James Morrison
	John A. Nash



- Mrs. Mary Overholt  
 W. L. Propst  
 Miss Eleanor Schlotter  
 Clyde C. Walton, Jr.  
 Miss Bess Whittaker  
*Keokuk*  
 Miss Mary Elsie Slack  
 Birdwell E. Sutlive, Jr.  
*Keswick*  
 C. M. Hummer  
 Glen H. Sorden  
*Kingsley*  
 Everett F. Lamb  
 Mrs. H. Floyd Phelps  
*Lamoni*  
 Public Schools  
*Lime Springs*  
 Maurice Williams  
*Lineville*  
 Frank Lynch  
*Lohrville*  
 Laurence Black  
*Manchester*  
 Ernest F. Lawman  
*Manly*  
 Arthur W. Holden  
*Maquoketa*  
 J. W. Brady, Jr.  
*Marshalltown*  
 Marshall County Bd. of Educ.  
*Mason City*  
 Max Boyd  
 Floyd E. Johnson  
 Roger C. Patton  
*Mediapolis*  
 Chas. L. Hutchcroft
- Missouri Valley*  
 Preston A. Niles  
*Montrose*  
 Ralph D. Cameron  
*Moorhead*  
 Mrs. Amy R. Taylor  
*Mount Vernon*  
 Robert E. Hansen  
 Burt H. Neal  
*New Sharon*  
 Independent School  
*Newton*  
 John C. O'Leary  
*Orient*  
 Mrs. Corda M. Bowen  
*Osage*  
 Mrs. Gerhard Goplerud  
*Oskaloosa*  
 W. C. Braden  
*Ottumwa*  
 Al Efner  
 O. R. Ross  
*Parkersburg*  
 Clifton Trewin Huntoon  
*Red Oak*  
 W. S. Mayne  
*Remsen*  
 Public School  
*Renwick*  
 Renwick School  
*Rolfe*  
 Nathan Bradburn  
 Mrs. Bertha Bruschi  
*Ruthven*  
 Dr. H. J. Morgan

*Sigourney*

Paul W. Utterback

*Silver City*

Miss Ona McNay

*Sioux City*

Mrs. R. Nason Friend

*Soldier*

Mrs. Gertrude Seaton

*South English*

Frank Euler

*Spencer*

Carl C. Larsen

Tommy Thompson

*Steamboat Rock*

Miss Clella L. Finster

*Storm Lake*

Independent School District

*Sumner*

W. C. Hahle

*Tennant*

Charles H. Eden

*Wadena*

Miss Loretta Mattocks

*Washington*

Mrs. Stella W. Latchem

E. E. Ward

*Waterloo*

Mrs. Raymond W. Cross

Carl R. Davis

Mrs. Harry J. McConnehey

Mrs. Esther K. Murray

Charles F. Swisher

*Waterville*

Consolidated School District

*Webster City*

George W. Vest

*Wellman*

Leo H. Durian

Ellery N. Foster

Mrs. Bertha Ward

*West Branch*

Charles Carran

*Williamsburg*

Mrs. Howard Harrington

*Wyoming*

Robert Killen

*California*

Mrs. George H. Lundvall,

El Cerrito

R. I. Clearman, Lindsay

Miss Julia Jorpeland, Los Angeles

*Illinois*

Emmett L. Costello, Chicago

Mrs. C. W. McPike, Rock Island

Lewis B. McVicker, Chicago

Monmouth College Library,

Monmouth

Mrs. Robert R. Reid, Chicago

Homan M. Youtz, Chicago

*Indiana*

Dr. Henry C. Miller,

Indianapolis

*Kansas*

Mrs. F. H. Rush, Pittsburg

*Minnesota*

Clarence De Witt, Pine River

*Nevada*

Dr. Roland Stahr, Reno

*New Jersey*

Mrs. Jane Zeleznjak,

Scotch Plain

*New York*

T. M. Avery, Glens Falls  
Mrs. Ralph O. Winger, Flushing

*Oklahoma*

A. and M. College Library,  
Stillwater

*Oregon*

Daniel Heffner, Portland

*Pennsylvania*

R. A. Beeson, Villanova

*Virginia*

Mrs. D. T. Boisseau, Maidens  
John K. Mahon, Arlington

*Washington*

Miss Elsie J. Remley, Seattle

*England*

Col. M. K. Matthews, London

*Hawaii*

Dr. F. J. Halford, Honolulu

*Iowa Historical Activities*

The Audubon Public Library has received a valuable collection of diaries of the late Dr. J. M. Fulton, an Audubon physician. The diaries, which discuss all phases of life in Audubon, are in 31 volumes and are typewritten. Some lively excerpts from the diaries were published in the October 11, 1951, *Audubon Advocate Republican*. Covering the years from 1907 to 1931, the diaries were in the possession of Dr. Fulton's daughter, Mrs. J. W. Reilly of Omaha, Nebraska, until deposited at the Library in Audubon.

Plans are being made for the organization of a Louisa County Historical Society for the purpose of preserving the old Louisa County courthouse. E. R. Hicklin is active in the movement.

Historic sites in McGregor are being marked by the McGregor Historical Society. The first marker was placed on the site of the home of the Ringlings of circus fame. A story of the marker and of the Ringling family appeared in the November 25, 1951, *Des Moines Register*.

The Tama County Historical Society has established a shelf of books on the Sauk and Fox Indians among their exhibits at the courthouse in Tama. Gifts of additional books for this collection will be welcome. Mrs. W. G. MacMartin of Tama is president of the Society.

The new Grinnell Historical Museum was officially opened on September 21 and 22, 1951. Among the articles on display were a clock, a chair, and a quilt from the home of Josiah B. Grinnell. The museum is open on Fridays and Saturdays from 2:30 to 5:00 p. m.

The September meeting of the Guthrie County Historical Society was

held in Jackson Township at the home of B. F. Shaw, which is on the site of the Harbour stage station. Mrs. Hazel Freiberg of Stuart read a paper on her grandfather, Dan Bacon, who drove stagecoaches from Des Moines to Council Bluffs before the days of the railroads. Other speakers were John C. Nevins, of Dexter, whose grandfather, John Nevins, was the first white settler in the county; and the Rev. R. J. Cornell, who gave an account of the State Historical Society's Mississippi River cruises. The October meeting of the Society was held in Panora, while the November gathering took place at Stuart, where the members listened to Mrs. Fred Hartsook of Winterset, president of the Madison County Historical Society, and to the Rev. Ernest Smith, who gave a history of the new Friends church at Stuart.

A series of Methodist meetings throughout the state was held in September to commemorate the centennials of Cornell and Morningside colleges, both Methodist schools.

Luther College at Decorah celebrated its ninetieth anniversary on October 12 and 13, 1951. Stories and pictures of the college appeared in the *Decorah Journal* for October 11, 14, and 18, 1951; and in the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* of October 14, 1951.

John Tank was elected president of the Scott County German-American Pioneer Society at a meeting September 11, 1951, at Davenport. Other officers of the Society are Charles Bracker, vice-president; Helmuth H. Jebens, secretary; William O. Wieck, treasurer; and Emil Rohwedder, Henry G. Behr, Sr., and Albert A. Meier, trustees.

The 1951 annual meeting of the Union County Historical Society was held October 4 at Creston. New officers elected were Richard Brown of Creston, president; Ira Walker of Dodge Township, vice-president; Ella M. Day of Creston, secretary; and Grace Harsh of Creston, historian. Miss Harsh contributed a short history of the Society to the September 29 issue of the *Creston News Advertiser*. A petition is being circulated for a room to house the Society's relics in the new courthouse. Richard Brown was the principal speaker at the meeting, discussing the early day of the county.

Glenwood, in Mills County, is planning for the celebration of its centennial in 1952. Whitney Gilliland has been appointed chairman of the planning committee.



## HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS

### Book Notes

*The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure, 1874-1920.* (New York, Macmillan Co., 1951. \$4.00.) This is the first of two volumes of the memoirs of Herbert Hoover. The opening chapter deals with his first ten years of life in Iowa. From there the story continues through his life in Oregon and California, his education, his wide travels as a mining engineer, his work for Belgian Relief, as Food Administrator during the first World War, and his activities at the Peace Conference at Versailles. Almost three-quarters of this volume deals with Hoover's activities in national and international affairs; as such it is of great value as the account of an observer and participant of great events.

*Mr. Lincoln's Contemporaries: An Album of Portraits by Mathew B. Brady.* By Roy Meredith. (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951. \$6.00.) The appeal of this book is twofold: the historian will like the pictures and accompanying brief sketches of the personalities; the photographer will delight in this collection of one of America's first and most famous "cameramen." The excellence of many of the pictures, considering that they date from the 1860's, is a constant amazement. There are 172 portraits of the great and near-great of the Civil War era, each picture managing to convey some hint of the personality of the subject.

*A History of the South.* Edited by Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, \$6.00 per vol.) Vol. I: *The Southern Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, 1607-1689*, by Wesley Frank Craven (1949); Vol. V: *The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848*, by Charles S. Sydnor (1948); Vol. VIII: *The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877*, by E. Merton Coulter (1947); Vol. IX: *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*, by C. Vann Woodward (1951). These four volumes, together with Vol. VII (*The Confederate States of America, 1861-1865*, by E. Merton Coulter), represents half of the projected ten-volume history of the South. Each volume is written by an outstanding scholar in that particular period, and when completed the series will represent a definite contribution to regional history.

*Three Hundred Years American: The Epic of a Family from Seventeenth-Century New England to Twentieth-Century Midwest.* By Alice F. and Bettina Jackson. (Madison, The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1951. \$4.00.) Here is a new type of genealogy. Instead of a dry listing of names, marriages, deaths, and descendants, the authors have written the story of Edward Jackson and his descendants in America. The account is based on a study of records and the use of a large collection of family papers. Liberal quotations from letters and diaries lend interest to the book. In addition, it is a history, from the point of view of a family, of America and its migrating population.

*Nursing in Ohio: A History.* By James H. Rodabaugh and Mary Jane Rodabaugh. (Columbus, Ohio State Nurses' Assn., 1951. \$4.00.) This well-written and attractive book is a contribution to medical history. The story of Ohio nurses, from the pioneer frontier to service in America's two World Wars, is told by two trained researchers. Their book is based largely on the manuscript collections of the Ohio State Nurses' Association and the archives of the Ohio State Nurses' Board.

*The Story of Trinity Episcopal Church, Muscatine, Iowa, 1839-1951.* (Printed at Iowa City, Economy Advertising Co., 1951.) This attractive 30-page book, designed by Carroll Coleman, Curator of the State Historical Society of Iowa, could well serve as a model for other church histories. The account is based largely on an earlier history of the church, written in 1892 by J. P. Walton of Muscatine. The illustrations, both old and new, are of interest as showing the evolution from a frame cabin to a stone edifice. The concluding page lists the Bishops of the Diocese of Iowa, and the Rectors of Trinity Church, from the beginning to the present day.

*Guide to the Illinois Central Archives in the Newberry Library, 1851-1906.* Compiled by Carolyn Curtis Mohr. (Chicago, Newberry Library, 1951.) This "Guide," similar to the one published several years ago on the Burlington Railroad's records at the Newberry Library, will be of great value to scholars wishing to use the tremendous and valuable collection of Illinois Central Railroad material now housed in that famous Chicago library.

### Articles

*Agricultural History*, April, 1951, contains the following articles of gen-

eral interest: "The Historical Background of Turner's Frontier Essay," by Lee Benson, and "A Comparison of Railroad Land-Grant Policies," by William S. Greever.

In "Some Demagogues in American History," in the October, 1951, *American Historical Review*, Reinhard H. Luthin surveys demagoguery in the past, from Dr. Michael Leib of Revolutionary days to Theodore G. Bilbo of modern times.

The Autumn, 1951, issue of the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* contains a variety of articles of interest. "Voice of the Volunteer of 1847," by Dayton W. Canady, is an article on *The Picket Guard*, a Mexican War army newspaper published by two Illinois soldiers during the occupation of Saltillo in 1847. Several letters of Robert Todd Lincoln, discussing family and political affairs, appear in "Robert Todd Lincoln and a Family Friendship," by Charles V. Darrin. Carroll H. Quenzel, in "Books for the Boys in Blue," recounts the activities of the United States Christian Commission in furnishing lending libraries to hospitals, camps, and vessels during the Civil War. Other articles are "Hard Times in Illinois in 1780," by John H. Hauberg, and "A Beginner on the Old Eighth Judicial Circuit," by Harry E. Pratt.

In "Prelude to Populism" in *Minnesota History* for September, 1951, Donald F. Warner gives an account of the activities of the Northwestern Farmers Alliance in Minnesota, a movement led by Ignatius Donnelly.

The April-July, 1951, issue of *North Dakota History* contains three articles of interest to frontier historians: "Old Fort Stevenson — A Typical Missouri River Military Post," by Ray H. Mattison; Part II of "North Dakota Land Grants," by Harold A. Hagen; and "Military Trails in North Dakota: Fort Abercrombie to Fort Wadsworth, 1864," by Dana Wright.

The October, 1951, *Vermont Quarterly* contains an article which should have wide circulation. In "Don't Burn Those Manuscripts!" James Taylor Dunn of the New York State Historical Association makes a strong plea for preserving all old papers, letters, business records, and documents. He cites many cases of really worthwhile collections being burned as junk. "Junk is History," writes Mr. Dunn, quoting Louis C. Jones, director of the New York Association. The papers and letters of prominent men are preserved, but, writes Mr. Dunn, "it is the letters, diaries and record books of the little

people — the uneducated, the poor, the persecuted as they settled this vast country, that have to be watched for to insure against their being carelessly burned or discarded.” The writings of our forefathers deserve a place in our historical societies and museums; there, trained historians can use them to add to our knowledge of the past.

*The Papers of the Albemarle County Historical Society* (Virginia) for 1950-1951 contains an article by John H. Moore on “James Gaven Field, Populist Candidate for the Vice-Presidency,” in which the author gives a brief biography of this little-known running mate of James B. Weaver in the Populist campaign of 1892.

Articles in *Michigan History*, September, 1951, include: “Michigan’s Writing Men,” by Arnold Mulder; “Michigan’s Contribution to the Development of the Diesel Engine Industry,” by James R. Irwin; and “The Speeding Tempo of Urbanization,” by Willis F. Dunbar, a chapter from the author’s manuscript history of Michigan.

The Illinois Central Railroad, as part of its centennial observance, has issued a 43-page booklet entitled “The Building of Mid-America,” which contains “20 railroad stories as told by a fifth generation member of an Illinois Central family.”

A new state publication of unusual interest and attractiveness is *Virginia Cavalcade*, sponsored by the Virginia State Library of Richmond, Virginia. To be published quarterly, the first issue appeared in the Summer of 1951. In format, the journal resembles the *American Heritage* sponsored by the American Association for State and Local History. The first issue contained articles on George Mason, and on his home, “Gunston Hall”; on the famous Virginia Declaration of Rights; on John Rolfe, the husband of Pocahontas; on Archibald Cary, “practical politician”; and on many other topics in Virginia’s past. The illustrations are attractive and well selected. The Autumn, 1951, issue deals with Virginia churches, inns, covered bridges, Indian agriculture, and several famous Virginians. The articles are contributed by the editor, W. Edwin Hemphill, and his associates, Elizabeth Dabney Coleman, James R. V. Daniel, William H. Gaines, Jr., and William M. E. Raschal.

The December, 1951, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* contains the following articles: “The New Republic and the Idea of Progress, 1914-1920,” by David W. Noble; “State Assumption of the Federal Debt During



the Confederation," by E. James Ferguson; "Horace Greeley and the Secession Movement, 1860-1861," by Thomas N. Bonner; "Communism and the Great Steel Strike of 1919," by Robert K. Murray; and "Guides to American History Manuscript Collections in Libraries of the United States," by Ray Allen Billington.

### *Iowa*

The October, 1951, *Annals of Iowa* is largely devoted to the second installment of Maude Lauderdale's "The Webster County Bar," a valuable account of Webster County lawyers over the years. Other articles are: "Indians Repelled in Kossuth," which is a contemporary account by Ambrose A. Call of an Indian encounter in Kossuth County in 1855; "Christmas of a Pioneer Family," by Matie L. Baily; and "Pioneer Iowa Homes," by N. Tjernagel.

The Summer, 1951, issue of the *Iowa Law Review* contains "In Memory of Honorable Wiley Rutledge — Proceedings before United States Supreme Court," in which the various Justices pay tribute to their colleague. Walter L. Daykin of the State University of Iowa contributes "The Operation of the Taft-Hartley Act's Non-Communist Provisions" in the same issue.

"Iowa Division is King Size in Every Way," is the title of an article in the September, 1951, *Illinois Central Magazine*. The article covers the largest division of the Illinois Central Railroad — the "Western Lines" division, which crosses north-central Iowa from Dubuque, through Waterloo, Fort Dodge, and Cherokee to Sioux City.

Two articles on the history of Masonry appeared in Iowa newspapers recently. The Cedar Rapids *Gazette* for October 21, 1951, carried the story by John Robertson of Crescent Lodge of Cedar Rapids, which celebrated its 100th anniversary on October 22. Mistletoe Lodge of Sheldon was founded in 1876. In the Sheldon *Mail* for October 31, 1951, John Campbell reviewed the history of that lodge.

The Coon Rapids *Enterprise* was founded in October, 1881. The October 12, 1951, issue contained a story of the founding of the paper by Ed E. Stowell. Accompanying the story is a picture of the first page of the first issue of the paper.

A history of the town of Marysville, in Marion County, appeared in the

Knoxville *Journal* for October 18, 1951, as part of the centennial celebration of that town.

How a streetcar line grew into a railroad is told in the October 14, 1951, issue of the Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, in recounting the history of the Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Northern Railroad.

Following is a list of the Iowa churches which celebrated birthdays recently, together with the dates of newspapers carrying stories of these celebrations and brief histories of the churches:

Grace Lutheran Church, Tripoli — 50 years old — *Waterloo Courier*, October 12, 1951.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Des Moines — 50 years old — *Des Moines Tribune*, October 13, 1951.

Grace Evangelical United Brethren Church, Aredale — 50 years old — *Dumont Journal*, October 31, 1951.

Buchanan Union Church — 54 years old — *Tipton Conservative*, November 22, 1951.

Calvary Evangelical United Brethren Church, Des Moines — 60 years old — *Des Moines Tribune*, October 13, 1951.

Williamson Memorial United Presbyterian Church, Burlington — 75 years old — *Burlington Hawkeye-Gazette*, November 23, 1951.

First Congregational Church, Newell — 80 years old — *Newell Mirror*, November 15, 1951.

Elk Creek Lutheran Church, Joice — 85 years old — *Northwood Anchor*, October 4, 1951.

Friends Meeting House, Stuart — 95 years old — *Stuart Herald*, September 13, 1951.

First Methodist Church, Anamosa — 100 years old — *Anamosa Journal*, October 4, 11, 1951; *Anamosa Eureka*, October 4, 1951.

St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Waukon — 100 years old — *Waukon Democrat*, September 6, 1951.

Hopkins Grove United Brethren Church — 100 years old — *Madrid Register News*, September 6, 13, 1951; *Des Moines Tribune*, September 6, 1951.

Zion Mennonite Church, Donnellson — 100 years old — *Donnellson Review*, November 15, 1951; *Burlington Hawkeye-Gazette*, November 23, 1951.

Friends Church, Lynnville — 100 years old — *Grinnell Herald-Register*, October 4, 1951.

Winterset Methodist Church — 102 years old — *Winterset Madisonian*, October 10, 1951.

Pleasant Hill Christian Church — 115 years old — *Washington Journal*, October 12, 1951.

The John Todd house in Tabor is 98 years old. Its original owner, the Rev. John Todd, was a "conductor" on the Underground Railway in the 1850's, and was instrumental in sending many Negroes on to freedom in Canada. The story of the house, and pictures of the exterior and interior, appeared in the October 14, 1951, issue of the Council Bluffs *Nonpareil*.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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## COVER

Outside the Chautauqua Tent at Estherville, Iowa, 1910.  
Picture contributed by Miss Lucile Peterson, Librarian at Estherville.

## CHAUTAUQUA IN IOWA

By *Harrison John Thornton*

There is a certain obvious connection between chautauqua and the lyceum as it developed in the American scene. Beginning with little groups of neighbors in small New England communities applying themselves to a selected plan of study, the lyceum evolved into a system of mass indoor gatherings assembled across the country to hear peripatetic lecturers, some of whom were among the most brilliant speakers in the nation—Ralph Waldo Emerson, Wendell Phillips, Henry Ward Beecher, John B. Gough, George William Curtis, Booker T. Washington, and many another. Within the two decades following the Civil War the lyceum platform had fallen into the hands of less eminent speakers and general entertainers whose program, in the many communities visited during the winter season, was known as the “lyceum course.”

Following in the wake of the lyceum, chautauqua, like its predecessor, continued to challenge the conventional conviction that “formal learning” was an affair of the regular schools, confined to childhood and adolescent years. Believing that mental and cultural growth was a process commensurate with life itself, the founders of chautauqua regarded their institution as an agency of adult education and sought, by various means, to be guides and teachers to the immense out-of-school population. Never pretending that chautauqua’s educational system was a substitute for college, they yet hoped to give to their studious followers the “college student’s general outlook upon the world and life, and to develop the habit of close, connected, persistent thinking.”<sup>1</sup> As in the case of the lyceum, chautauqua passed through changing phases. It is necessary for the student of the movement to have these in mind as historical patterns and cultural judgments take shape in his thought.

There was and is an original unit of Chautauqua whose name, to be correct, should be spelled with a capital letter. It made its appearance in the state of New York at the outset of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In its initial stages it gave no hint of what extraordinary consequences were to flow from a simple beginning.

<sup>1</sup> John H. Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement* (Boston, 1886), 75.



It was in the early 1870's that two zealous Methodists, one a minister, the other a layman, found themselves drawn together by their mutual interest in improving the quality of Sunday School teaching. In their many discussions, the Rev. John H. Vincent argued for a series of teachers' institutes at which pedagogical methods suitable for Sunday School purposes could be examined. Lewis Miller liked the idea, but proposed that the meetings be held outdoors, in the belief that a combined program of study and recreation would be something novel and would prove attractive to regular school teachers particularly, but also to others. Vincent's conservative instincts were overcome, and in August, 1874, the Sunday School Teachers' Assembly organized by these two men held its first session in southwestern New York.<sup>2</sup>

One could almost believe that the leaders were inspired in their selection of the locale for this gathering. It was in Chautauqua County, on the shore of a lovely lake bearing the same intriguing name. To this day no one knows for sure its meaning, though many romantic legends have evolved out of the search for interpretations. The term is commonly accepted as being of Indian derivation.

A daily average of 4,000 persons was present during the two weeks of that Methodist-sponsored institute.<sup>3</sup> Twenty-five hundred were in actual residence during the entire period. It was reported that 10,000 persons were present on one occasion, to hear the preaching of the Rev. Thomas de Witt Talmage.<sup>4</sup> The program of study provided for attendance at lectures and sermons, for instruction in methodology, and for written tests.

So pronounced was the success of this venture that there was little question of another session the following summer. Nor was there hesitation about the locality. The Chautauqua woodland was a place of great natural beauty, and Lake Chautauqua was seriously compared by seasoned travelers to Como and Killarney.

The second season brought new features to the program. Though Sunday School pedagogy was still considered the primary purpose, and examinations to measure proficiency were solemnly conducted, elements of nonreligious education were admitted to the curriculum. In the broadening

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-21; Leon H. Vincent, *John Heyl Vincent* (New York, 1925), 117.

<sup>3</sup> G. L. Westgate, *Official Report of National Sunday School Teachers' Assembly Held at Fair Point, Chautauqua, August 4-18, 1874*, 6, 172, 180-81.

<sup>4</sup> *Chautauqua Assembly Herald*, May 10, 1877, p. 2.

mind of John Vincent there was no essential demarcation between the secular and the sacred. "Things secular," he wrote, "are under God's governance, and are full of divine meanings." It was as much in order to study the heavens, the earth, and the sea, as to search into the treasures and mysteries of Holy Writ.<sup>5</sup> And so, from this point forward, Chautauqua rapidly became a place for the summer-time study of literature, science, history, the social sciences, foreign languages, the arts, and virtually all the subjects found in the curriculum of a conventional academic establishment. Indeed, a college of liberal arts was organized on the margin of the lake, beneath the trees where the Erie and Seneca once followed their primitive ways and fought their bloody tribal feuds. For a brief season, Chautauqua even held a university charter from the legislature of the state of New York. In the light of these considerations, the Institution does not hesitate to put forward the claim that it is the oldest continuing summer school for serious academic study in the country.

In making its empirical development through the years, and giving increasing emphasis to the arts and sciences, Chautauqua never surrendered the spirit of piety with which it began its life. Denominational distinctiveness early went by the board, and most of the churches responded to the invitation to set up summer headquarters on Chautauqua's spacious grounds, and to dwell and work together in a spirit of unity. Roman Catholic services have been held beneath the leafy canopy, and many of the faithful make their way to nearby community churches to attend mass. Every morning during the season the chaplain for the week leads the audience in the massive amphitheater in religious study; at dusk each Sunday the cherished vesper service of "Old First Night" (August 4, 1874) is repeated on the lake shore.

In this brief review of the original Chautauqua, mention must be made of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle. John Vincent was troubled by the broken contact and the long silence between assemblies from one summer season to another. He was concerned, moreover, with discovering an effective device whereby the clientele could continue in the winter the habits of study acquired during the summer months. The fruit of his searching was the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle whose enrolled members were pledged to carry forward certain prescribed reading in literature, science, history, religion, and philosophy through a four-year

<sup>5</sup> Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement*, 30-31.

period. Those who endured, and presented evidence of accomplishment, were entitled to attend recognition ceremonies at Chautauqua, pass through the Golden Gate into the Hall of Philosophy, and receive a diploma of merit. It is estimated that about a million persons committed themselves to this program (though not all endured to the end). It has been called the first book club in America. The reading prescribed for the members has maintained a worthy standard through the years. The first book chosen in 1878 was John Richard Green, *A Short History of the English People*. Other early selections were Charles Merivale, *A General History of Rome from the Foundation of the City to the Fall of Augustulus*; Horace Bushnell, *The Character of Jesus*; Lyman Abbott, *A Study of Human Nature*; Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Warren Hastings*; and Richard T. Ely, *An Introduction to Political Economy*.<sup>6</sup>

The fame of the original Chautauqua spread throughout the land, and not only in all the states of the Union but in several foreign countries imitative chautauquas made their appearance. These independent units never had official connection with the New York group, but in their prototype they found guidance and inspiration. By lovely lakesides, in sequestered valleys and woodland clearings, on hillsides and mountain slopes, they found fertile flowering. Drawn by the magic name of chautauqua, increasing thousands of Americans gathered each summer in great canvas enclosures, or more permanent buildings, to engage in devotional exercises, attend informative or inspirational lectures, and listen to better music than had previously been their fortune. Thus, for several days or weeks, the followers of this new movement found release from the routines and tensions of daily living, and returned to their homes with new impressions and judgments of the world that lay beyond their local experience. They were cheered through the long winter by the memory of the past season, and sustained by happy anticipation of the next summer's chautauqua.

The people of Iowa were much affected by both the original and the independent chautauquas. Through July and August each year an unorganized contingent of Iowans joined the swelling throng from all the other commonwealths in the nation-wide hegira to the lakeside in western New York. They went to spend the whole or a portion of the season at Chautauqua. Some stayed at the hotels or at rooming or boarding houses, of which there has

<sup>6</sup> For extensive bibliography of C. L. S. C. selections, cf. Arthur Eugene Bestor, Jr., *Chautauqua Publications, An Historical and Bibliographical Guide* (New York, 1934).



always been an ample number; others leased lots within the official enclosure and built summer homes, or cottages as they are most commonly called. Through the years they joined in the great song and worship services, listened to preachers of national and international reputation such as Phillips Brooks, Frank W. Gunsaulus, Shailer Mathews, and Harry Emerson Fosdick. They attended the lectures of such scholars as Henry Drummond, Moses Coit Tyler, Herbert B. Adams, Richard T. Ely, John B. McMaster, John Fiske, Herman E. Von Holst, Edward Eggleston, Albert Bushnell Hart, Andrew D. White, James (Lord) Bryce, and Charles W. Eliot. The voices of Jane Addams, Alice Freeman Palmer, Mary A. Livermore, and Ruth Bryan Owen were heard within the Amphitheater, as were also those of Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Theodore Roosevelt made five visits to Chautauqua; Franklin Roosevelt, four.

Iowans entered heartily into the program of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle. Local reading circles were organized and active at Ackley, Brighton, Burlington, Belle Plaine, Grinnell, Davenport, Corydon, Muscatine, Des Moines, Iowa City, Marshalltown, Council Bluffs, Strawberry Point, Humboldt, Grundy Center, Afton, Legrand, Sioux City, Wapello, Indianola, Hopkinton, Winterset, Hamburg, Decorah, Fairfield, Washington, Tabor, Keosauqua, Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, Manchester, and many other communities. Some cities in the state, with more Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle members than could be contained in a single unit, established multiple organizations. Des Moines, for example, at one time had thirty circles in operation, and, for more effective administration, formed them into two federations: the Chautauqua Union and the Chautauqua League. Iowa City had a union composed of four divisions, one for each section of the town.

In addition to these associations with the original and continuing Chautauqua, now known as Chautauqua Institution, Iowa was well endowed with independent chautauqua units. As stated previously, these establishments were never officially connected with the New York Assembly even though all pirated the striking name and were closely imitative of it in certain procedural phases. Some of them were friendly to the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, commending it to their patrons. A few even set up a replica of the "Golden Gate" and, acting for the New York Insit-



tution, presented the diplomas, sent from Chautauqua, to local readers who were unable to journey eastward for the ceremony of recognition. Individuals who had appeared on the New York program frequently accepted invitations from the independents, and, on occasions, officials from Chautauqua, even John H. Vincent himself, would make a good-will visit.

These fixed, local chautauquas achieved their greatest extension during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, though some continued through the first decades of the twentieth. Iowa could come close to claiming priority both in organizing an independent, and in being the last of the states to retain one. A chautauqua was established at Clear Lake as early as 1876, only two years after Vincent and Miller launched their innovation in New York.<sup>7</sup> The final surviving independent in the commonwealth appears to have been at Mediapolis, close neighbor of Burlington. It finally succumbed in 1944, forty years after its organization.<sup>8</sup> In the number of active independents, Iowa was probably the leading state in the Union. Forty-seven were in operation in 1906.<sup>9</sup>

The organization and purpose of the independent units everywhere were generally the same as those for the Johnson County Chautauqua Association, incorporated in 1906. The declared object was "to hold an annual public assembly, and to employ talent to entertain and instruct the public in science, philosophy, history, literature, music, economics and art."<sup>10</sup> The articles of incorporation for the chautauqua at Clarinda, after making much the same statement, added that the objective was also "to disseminate sound knowledge on moral, social, and economic questions, to inculcate the principles of the Christian religion and to advance the highest interests of the home, the church, and the state."<sup>11</sup> Shares of stock in the Johnson County Association were to be issued in denominations of ten dollars which conveyed voting privileges to the owner, but no member of the corporation was to derive pecuniary profit from its activities prior to a final dissolution of the property holdings.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Hugh A. Orchard, *Fifty Years of Chautauqua* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1923), 43.

<sup>8</sup> *Burlington Iowa Hawkeye-Gazette*, July 16, 1945.

<sup>9</sup> *Talent*, 16:53-9 (December, 1905); 17:50-60 (September, 1906).

<sup>10</sup> Pearl R. Kiser, "History of Iowa City Chautauqua" (M. A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1935), 75-6.

<sup>11</sup> Bertha Waterman, "A History of the Chautauqua at Clarinda, Iowa" (M. A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1937), 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> Kiser, "History of Iowa City Chautauqua," 76.

Intellectually, the emulative units were less pretentious in performance than the declarations of purposes, with their allusions to the arts and sciences, would lead one to expect. Here is an example of that imitativeness of terminology and procedure in respect to the original Chautauqua that became conventional, even automatic, with the independents. But none of them ever seriously approached the academic level of their prototype in terms of a study system, either during the weeks of the assembly or in the long interval between seasons. It is generally true to say that the model for the locals was not the system of summer school study, with an impressive curriculum of history, literature, social science, foreign languages, musicology, and similar subjects, and the habit of sustained library usage, but rather the popular amphitheater platform at the New York lakeside with its program of informative and inspirational lectures, musical events, plays, pageants, and nonsectarian religious exercises. The latter were given expression in a community union service on Sunday mornings during the chautauqua period, and also, in some instances, in a daily Bible-study hour.

Generally speaking, the fixed, local, independent chautauquas declined as the circuit chautauquas arose, though some, as has been seen, continued to hold their ground not only parallel with the circuits, but even to outlast them. A circuit was composed of a group of towns or villages, more or less adjacent, pledged to receive an associated company of performers or "talent," as it was commonly referred to, through a designated number of days. Each community was visited by the same group on successive days during the period contracted for. This might be for several weeks, or as little as three, four, or five days. The general tendency was for the season to grow shorter as the chautauqua movement ran its course. In the earlier phases, the practice was common for the patrons from many miles around to descend upon the chautauqua rendezvous, set up tents, and establish what took on the appearance of a "canvas city." This was true in both the independent and circuit phases. In time, however, instead of greeting each platform item with equal fervor, patrons became more selective as to what sessions they would attend, and many preferred to pay for individual performances rather than purchase season tickets for all of them.<sup>13</sup> The whole organization was under the management of a chautauqua bureau of which a great number appeared and flourished as the third phase of the chautauqua movement appeared and expanded.

<sup>13</sup> This became most obvious in chautauqua's period of decline.

The circuit system was not original with the chautauqua movement. It was used by the lyceum before it, as that institution passed beyond its first phase of local groups studying together in search of individual improvement to the practice of listening to visiting lecturers. The circus, carnival, and traveling tent drama, or road show, even the showboats moving from one river town to another, obviously were circuit practitioners. Chautauquans did not appreciate this association, however, and were at much pains to repudiate any comparison between themselves and other itinerant entertainers. It cannot fairly be said that this dislike proceeded from snobbery or self-righteousness. It arose rather from the conviction and the fact that chautauqua took an advanced position on public and private morals and desired the cultural and spiritual elevation of its following. The carnival connotation came usually from critics, whimsical or savage, who found those they considered to be "uplifters" and "dogooders" extremely irritating, or from those who, confused by the similarity of paraphernalia: tents, freight cars, and gaily colored posters, assumed that the parallel was thus established between the circus and chautauqua.

In a sense it can be said that the itinerant or circuit chautauqua arose out of the thought that if Mohammed could not go to the mountain, the mountain might go to Mohammed. Clearly, not all who desired were able, from considerations of convenience or expense, to journey to the Lake Chautauqua Assembly, or even to a nearer independent at an attractive vacation locale. But a chautauqua coming right into the community, offering its treasures for a modest sum, and requiring a minimum of interference with the daily habits and obligations of the people, established a situation that was attractive and available to almost everyone. The popularity of the idea was indicated by the mounting response that greeted the circuit arrangement as it spread enormously through the land.

The key to the system was a "talent"-controlling bureau located in a cosmopolitan center. Field workers were sent into a territory to organize a chain of communities into a circuit and proclaim the worth of chautauqua. The movement was represented as the ally of the church, the school, and the home in the work of elevating and enriching the life of the people. After developing a favorable atmosphere, the next step was the creation of a citizens' committee in each town to promote a chautauqua there. This committee labored to stimulate enthusiasm for the venture, reach agreement on the dates and duration of the chautauqua period, spearhead the drive



for the sale of season tickets, and provide guarantees that the minimum amount of income required by the bureau would be forthcoming. The latter feature seemed to give point to the complaint of certain critics that, unlike the church and school, chautauqua was a profit-making institution. This charge, however, can hardly be sustained. The price of a season ticket for the average chautauqua was from two to three dollars; out of this source, together with general admission charges for individual performances, the cost of administration, talent, and all other expenses had to be paid. Thus, the charge to the patron was small, while the bureau's income was seldom if ever inordinately high; sometimes, in lean seasons, it was discouragingly low and even, on occasions, represented a loss on the venture. In general, chautauqua was not a money-making institution, and the elements of public service and moral idealism were usually and sincerely present in the managerial mind.

The circuit chautauquas spread swiftly and extensively through the United States and far exceeded the scope of the independents. Not only did they take root in every state of the Union, but in Canada, Alaska, Great Britain, several European countries, Australia, and New Zealand. They even reached into Asia, as Chinese students studying in this country sent back reports of this unique folk institution. As they multiplied, so also did the number of bureaus whose business it was to supply the operating staffs and the talent for the circuits they created. Iowa had a leading role in the transition of chautauqua from the independent to the circuit stage. This was due in large degree to the boldness of concept, the organizing and managerial genius, and the driving energy of Keith Vawter, a native-born Iowan who spent much of his life in Cedar Rapids. Not only did his career make a deep impact on the life of his state but on the whole nation also, as the work he did so much to initiate spread across the land.

When Vawter was a student at Drake University in 1895 he was already interested in lyceum management, particularly in booking lecturers and other "talent" for lyceum "courses" which many communities sustained as a winter enterprise. In 1899 young Keith Vawter organized the Standard Lecture (or Lyceum) Bureau with an office in Des Moines, and in its management gained valuable experience for the work he was to do. In 1902 he joined the Redpath Lyceum Bureau in Chicago, and thus made contact with that notable name so closely connected with lyceum activities. James Redpath is credited with being the creator of the booking office



system for lyceum performers, and his name continued to be freely employed as chautauqua began its traveling period. In 1903 Vawter organized the Redpath Chautauquas at Chicago.<sup>14</sup>

The following year, Vawter began the adaptation of the circuit plan to chautauqua. In this he appears to have been a prime figure.<sup>15</sup> He is credited with having said: "The people in general cannot go to the Chautauqua; it is too far away and too expensive a trip. I will take the Chautauqua to them."<sup>16</sup> Assembling the necessary impedimenta — huge canvas tents, portable platforms and lighting systems, pianos, and benches for the audience — he persuaded a small number of communities to receive the company of performers whose booking manager he was.<sup>17</sup> It was a novel adventure for chautauqua which, since John H. Vincent and Lewis Miller had launched their great experiment, had been associated with some fixed and attractive location to which faithful and affectionate chautauquans journeyed.

To Vawter's dismay, the venture was a financial failure to the extent of \$7,000. "We told you so," declared the timid who were opposed to radical innovations. "Good," said unfriendly critics who resented this disturbing intrusion into an established preserve by an upstart Iowa youth.<sup>18</sup> But Vawter had courage and perseverance; in 1907 he tried again. After close analysis of his experience, he cut down expenses by more careful attention to travel schedules, talent grouping, and general circuit administration. This time, a measure of success attended his efforts. Here was encouragement, but "five long, lean years of unflagging toil and devotion to his ideal" were ahead.<sup>19</sup> Progressively, however, people became more interested, even enthusiastic. Newspaper acceptance and cooperation increased. Church and

<sup>14</sup> *Who Was Who in America*, 1:1275 (1897-1942).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Lyceumite and Talent*, 5:39-42 (March, 1912); Orchard, *Fifty Years of Chautauqua*, 113; Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (New York, 1951), 598; George S. Dalgety, "Chautauqua's Contributions to American Life," *Current History*, 34:39 (April, 1931); cf. also Richard G. Sherman, "Financial Aspects of the Circuit Chautauqua" (Seminar Study, State University of Iowa, 1951), 13n.

<sup>16</sup> *Lyceum News*, 1:6 (June, 1911).

<sup>17</sup> The number of communities involved is not clear from discoverable records. In the periodical, *Lyceumite and Talent*, 2:19 (September, 1908), the figure is given as fifteen chautauqua assemblies; Dalgety, *Current History*, 34:40 (April, 1931), asserts it was thirty-three.

<sup>18</sup> *Lyceum News*, 1:6 (June, 1911).

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Program, Le Mars, Iowa, Chautauqua, July 2-8, 1916.

pulpit support was forthcoming. The circuit system was assured, asserted the *Lyceum News*, which was giving attention to chautauqua affairs, and "Vawter's optimism [was] justified."<sup>20</sup>

Vawter was now thoroughly committed to the circuit method. In 1908 he left Chicago and set up his headquarters in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, so as to be, he said, at a more central point in his field of operations.<sup>21</sup> By that year he had two circuits reaching not only across Iowa but into Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, and Missouri as well and involving ninety-four assemblies in as many towns. These assemblies, known as the Redpath-Vawter Chautauqua System and the Western-Redpath System,<sup>22</sup> varied in length from six to twelve days.<sup>23</sup> By 1911 Vawter had increased the number of his circuit assemblies (towns) to 140 and had extended his field to the states of South Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming, and Oklahoma.<sup>24</sup> In 1915 more than 300 communities were embraced by the Redpath-Vawter Chautauqua Systems.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, Vawter had become associated with C. A. Pfeffer, who also became one of the country's leading chautauqua managers, to operate the Redpath Chautauquas of New York and New England.<sup>26</sup> Vawter's contacts, like his importance to the chautauqua movement, were very wide, not only through the office he held in the national organizations of the circuit chautauqua and the circuit lyceum, but also through his association with the notable bureau managers throughout the United States, the lecturers and other performers who formed the varied group known as the "talent," and the millions to whom his name was synonymous with chautauqua.

In September, 1916, a great company of professional chautauqua folk gathered for a banquet at the Congress Hotel in Chicago to do honor to the man whose abilities and labors counted for so much in developing to immense proportions the third and last phase of chautauqua. Acting as toastmaster, Louis J. Alber, himself a prominent lyceum and chautauqua figure, expressed the thought of all present when he said to Vawter:

<sup>20</sup> *Lyceum News*, 1:7 (June, 1911).

<sup>21</sup> *Lyceumite and Talent*, 2:43 (April, 1908).

<sup>22</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>23</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:23 (September, 1911).

<sup>25</sup> *The Lyceum Magazine*, 25:16 (June, 1915).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

Will anyone ever know how many communities your idea has re-deemed, and how many thousands, even millions of individuals the chautauqua has recreated, inspired to loftier purpose and greater service, and given the impetus to know more of the truth that it might make them free? You builded better than you knew, Mr. Vawter, when your idea gave such tremendous impetus to this experiment in democracy. And so I propose this toast, dear friends, to our honored guest: That many years may be his . . . and that his Ideal may live forever to bless the future generations.<sup>27</sup>

It was inevitable that Vawter would have his imitators; rival circuit managers quickly appeared. Associated with Vawter in his second venture in 1907 was Charles F. Horner who, following a period of school teaching and administration, had entered lyceum and chautauqua work the previous year. In 1912 he purchased Vawter's interest in the Western Redpath Chautauqua System.<sup>28</sup> From his base in Kansas City, Missouri, Horner became one of the large circuit operators in the land. Many other competitors pressed into the field that was expanding so phenomenally, and, to a striking extent, the precedent of adapting Redpath's name was continued. Horner called his circuits the Redpath-Horner System. Harry P. Harrison managed the Redpath-Chautauquas of Chicago, and his brother, W. V. Harrison, the Redpath-Chautauqua System of Cleveland, Ohio. There were also the Redpath-Brockway Chautauqua System of Pittsburgh, the Redpath-Chautauqua Systems of New York and New England, and some others. Additional powerful circuit systems were the Lincoln Chautauqua Series, with headquarters in Illinois; the Alkahest Chautauqua System, operating in the southern states; the Jones, Acme, and the Travers Systems, based in Iowa; the Radcliffe Chautauqua System with its offices in the national capital; the Midland of Chicago; the Cadmean Chautauqua System operating out of Topeka, Kansas; the Pennsylvania Chautauqua Association of Swarthmore, whose scholarly manager was Dr. Paul M. Pearson, father of the columnist Drew Pearson; the Ellison-White Chautauqua System whose field of operations extended from Colorado to the Pacific slope and into western Canada. Beyond these there were scores of other managerial systems.

<sup>27</sup> *Lyceum News*, 6:4-5 (September, 1916).

<sup>28</sup> *Who's Who in America*, 1942-43, 1109; *Lyceumite and Talent*, 3:36 (July, 1909); 5:35 (April, 1912).



The statistical results of these activities are difficult to arrive at. While some measure of regional and national lyceum and chautauqua association was achieved, no regular compilations of reliable figures are discoverable. But estimates were periodically made while the system flourished, and from a study of these a report may be ventured as of the early nineteen twenties when the circuit chautauqua reached its apogee. Between 8,500 and 10,000 separate assemblies had come into existence grouped into scores of circuits. Some assemblies were in every state of the Union. More of them were in the Middle West (the "chautauqua belt," some called it) than in any other section, and Iowa, with about 500, led all states.<sup>29</sup> The aggregate annual attendance at all meetings has been estimated at up to 40,000,000, but, of course, in this vast throng were many duplications. Over 5,000,000 season tickets were purchased in 1920, and their holders would attend most of the season's performances. Another estimate claims that in one year 7,000,000 season tickets were sold.<sup>30</sup> The study of attendance figures led Glenn Frank to say that "one out of every eleven persons — men, women, and children — in the United States attend a lyceum or chautauqua program some time during every calendar year."<sup>31</sup> The number of separate programs given in all the chautauqua assemblies approached the 100,000 mark in 1921. One leading bureau manager put the estimated income for a single year at \$20,000,000.<sup>32</sup> This is a low figure for some 10,000 assemblies, and would account for slight, if any, profit. The estimate, therefore, is not necessarily reliable.

It is to be remembered, however, that the financial returns from the circuits were often precarious. In the Redpath-Vawter Chautauqua System in 1922, for example, the Five-Day Circuit of 157 towns showed a profit of \$12,000, or about \$80 per town; the Star Circuit operations in 105 towns achieved \$8,500 profit, again about \$80 a town; the Seven-Day

<sup>29</sup> Charles F. Horner in *Boston Evening Transcript*, Jan. 29, 1921; *World's Work*, August, 1924; *New York Tribune* (Magazine and Book Section), August 19, 1923, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> *Philadelphia North American*, June 21, 1919; Bruce Bliven, *Collier's Magazine*, September 8, 1923, p. 7; data from program of a dinner celebrating the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Swarthmore Chautauqua System in 1912. The dinner was on January 7, 1921; *Philadelphia North American*, July 16, 1921; *Boston Evening Transcript*, Jan. 29, 1921.

<sup>31</sup> *Century Magazine*, 98:411 (July, 1919).

<sup>32</sup> *The Designer and the Woman's Magazine*, February, 1923; *Boston Evening Transcript*, Jan. 29, 1921; Bliven, *Collier's Magazine*, September 8, 1923, p. 6.



Circuit of 98 assemblies suffered a loss of \$14,700, or close to \$150 a town.<sup>33</sup>

Chautauqua has been variously described as the "people's university," "the parliament of the people," and a great "folknote" of the New World.<sup>34</sup> Such terms are doubtless extravagant, yet they have a measure of aptness. John H. Vincent's innovation, as has been noted, had an educational purpose, both religious and academic. As he declared when launching the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, "This organization aims to promote habits of reading and study in nature, art, science, and in secular and sacred literature." But the study was to be carried on "in connection with the routine of daily life," that is, without interruption of the pursuit of a livelihood in office, shop, field, factory, or kitchen. Vincent did not seek to achieve either a substitute or an equivalent for formal advanced education. The best he hoped for was to induce in his clientele "the college student's general outlook upon the world and life, and to develop the habit of close, connected, persistent thinking." But even this limited though laudable objective was far beyond the procedure and purpose of the independent, much less the circuit, chautauquas. These had no reading or serious academic program. The educational factors were found in the informative lectures dealing with travel, invention, current events, and, to some extent, social and economic problems.

The concept of the chautauqua gathering as a "parliament of the people" or New World "folknote" in the old Anglo-Saxon tribal sense is to be loosely interpreted. It was not regarded primarily or specifically as an assembly to debate public issues and controversies, though such discussions by the traveling platform speakers did occasionally occur, and, doubtless, debates were resolved and judgments made in the minds of many listeners. In a few instances a show of hands was called for, and a resolution adopted. It was, however, a firm rule among chautauqua managers that such things were to be avoided since they tended to incite controversy and create dissension. The original Chautauqua at New York sometimes permitted spirited debate on contentious subjects, with "both sides being heard," but for the rest, such occasions were rare. If the chautauquas were committed to

<sup>33</sup> Vawter Collection, Auditor's Report, 1922. (This collection is in the possession of the author.)

<sup>34</sup> Boston *Evening Transcript*, Jan. 29, 1921; Glenn Frank in *Century Magazine*, 98:411 (July, 1919); Herbert B. Adams, *Report of the United States Commissioner of Education, 1899-1900*, 1:314.

any crusade it was for "general goodness and uplift." That was a worthy course to take, and one need not necessarily be a cynic if he add, it was also a "safe" one since practically everyone was for it. Chautauqua did not come to divide communities but to contribute to their harmony, instruction, and pleasure. And it always believed it was engaged in adult education.

The audiences that assembled under the great canvas tops all over Iowa and across the land were composed of the ordinary run of people to be found anywhere in the Republic. It is probably true to say that chautauqua was a middle class movement. But the term can scarcely be used as implying that the working and wealthy elements held aloof. The great tents were seldom set up in the large manufacturing towns and so did not invade the habitat of either "proletarians" or "plutocrats." This was not with the design of avoiding capital or labor. It was simply that chautauqua was a small community movement. Unlike the rural regions, large industrial centers were well endowed with instructional and recreational facilities and institutions. If in the "chautauqua belt" there were both the economically affluent and the luckless, the distinction seldom hardened into class consciousness, and was lost within the inexpensive and generous encirclement of the chautauqua tent.

Consequently, chautauqua catered to farmers, tradesmen, businessmen, skilled and unskilled workers, doctors, bankers, lawyers, clergymen, housewives, and children. Regional variations brought to the composite audience fishermen from New England, cowboys from the Southwest, lumbermen from the Northwest, miners, oil and factory workers, teachers, superintendents, principals, and students from the high schools and the small college towns. Any chautauqua audience was a microcosm of American society.

The immediate force that drew the multitudes of people to the white or brown canvas enclosures was, of course, what was widely described as the "talent." These were the traveling artists welded into a company by the managing bureau to traverse the circuit and repeat their same performances before every affiliated assembly. Each person or small group followed in sequence until every community member of the circuit had been visited. In this manner, the first day performers in town number one of the chain would appear on the first day in all of the towns. Likewise, the talent for day number two in town number one would be responsible for day number two all the way around. The talent was composed of lecturers, singers, instrumentalists, interpretative readers, humorists, and such general entertain-

ers as magicians, jugglers, etc. Relatively late in the chautauqua period came the theatrical players who eventually overcame the popular prejudice against actors and anything suggestive of the theater.

It is probably true to say that, for the great proportion of the whole chautauqua period, the lecturer occupied the place of first importance in the hierarchy of talent. These were graded from the lords of the platform who had previously achieved eminence as political, pulpit, social, literary, journalistic, national, or international leaders, down to recent college graduates who had a flair for public expression. Of course, the big honors and emoluments were at the top among the big men.

Chautauqua audiences easily came under the oratorical spell. They were thrilled by the bold master of words, provided he remained comprehensible in substance and vocabulary. If in folly or arrogance his eloquence took flight beyond his auditors' range, he lost his hold, and the hour of opportunity vanished. The grand manner could produce rapture, yet the conversational mode, a little elevated, and inoffensive folksiness were preferred, as were also travel, national, and inspirational themes. "Mother, home, and heaven" topics were welcomed in a chautauqua tent, though demand was firm that they be sincerely dealt with.

A legion of speakers from the national and state legislatures, from the pulpits, and from college and university faculties flocked to the circuit platforms. Travelers, authors, inventors, generals, admirals, and former and future presidents of the United States did not scorn to follow the chautauqua trail. For a while, a Congressman who had appeared on chautauqua said little about it when he returned to Washington, but as the political and financial advantages of speaking to such vast and popular audiences were realized, the period of hesitation passed for many, and the opportunity was increasingly welcomed.<sup>35</sup>

A list of the names of lecturers on the chautauqua circuits would include, during the first three decades of the twentieth century, a large percentage of those who were prominent in American politics, religion, letters, humor, entertainment, travel, and public affairs. Among these performers, taken from the records quite at hazard, were William Jennings Bryan, Robert M. La Follette, Thomas Marshall, James A. Burns, Jonathan P. Dolliver, Mark Sullivan, William Howard Taft, Warren G. Harding, Glenn Frank, Ralph Parlette, James Whitcomb Riley, Madame Schumann-Heink, John Philip

<sup>35</sup> Dalgety, *Current History*, 34:41 (April, 1931).



Sousa, William (Billy) Sunday, Sam Jones, Maud Ballington Booth, Will Rogers, Strickland Gillilan, Opie Read, Paul Pearson, Russell H. Conwell, Stephen Wise, S. Parkes Cadman, Irvin S. Cobb, Ida Tarbell, Edna Ferber, Edgar Bergen.

William Jennings Bryan has been commonly called the "prince of chautauqua lecturers." In the fashion of our day he doubtless would be described as "Mr. Chautauqua." Bryan was active in all three phases of the movement, but most so on the circuits. He was in enormous demand, and from springtime in the South to the end of summer in the North he toiled over chautauqua's dusty trails. Year in and year out, the multitudes flocked to hear him as long as his strength and life endured. During 1919 he delivered 50 lectures in 28 days in Washington and Oregon. Someone took the trouble to make the computation that Bryan spoke to from 60,000 to 100,000 persons a day when at the height of his chautauqua career.<sup>36</sup> The great canvas walls bulged and strained at the seams, and sometimes were torn apart, when Bryan was to speak. At one assembly during his northwest tour, in July, 1919, over 7,000 single admissions were added to the audience of regular season ticket holders. At another, during the same year, the people stared incredulously at the spectacle of almost a thousand automobiles parked around the tent.<sup>37</sup> Like any other trouper, Bryan accepted all the hardships of circuit travel: taking trains late in the night, and in the morning before sunrise, or spending half the night in bleak railroad stations; riding the caboose of freight trains; eating on occasion in "greasy spoon" cafes and sleeping in cheerless small town hotels; driving over rough dirt and muddy roads in early vintage, side-curtained motor cars. Such unloveliness composed the nonglamorous side of chautauqua that the talent had to face.

But in spite of all the chautauqua performer had to endure, William Jennings Bryan was the picture of imperturbability before the tented audience. Fortified by great blocks of ice and pitchers of ice water, the golden-tongued orator was idolized for his endurance and for what he had to say. His "sacrifices" for chautauqua were marked and appreciated. "He could make a million dollars a year as head of a corporation," an admirer proudly declared. "But he is content to go with the chautauqua and make a few thousand." It was recognized that he was not without reward, how-

<sup>36</sup> *Lyceum Magazine*, 35:15 (August, 1926).

<sup>37</sup> Gladstone Park (Oregon), *Lyceum Magazine*, 29:31 (August, 1919).



ever. "He gets \$250 at the gate for his work," it was observed. "He is reportedly worth \$200,000, has much land and two houses."<sup>38</sup> So popular was Bryan, and in such enormous demand, that he commonly delayed making specific acceptance of his invitations until ready to take the road on an itinerary. He would then assemble his own sequence of towns. Presumably, some such scheme was necessary, yet it sometimes gave offense, brought him under criticism, and was the despair of harassed circuit managers.<sup>39</sup>

Bryan's subject matter may be gathered from the titles of his lectures: "The Ideal Republic," "The Passing of Plutocracy," "A Conquering Nation," "The Old World and Its Ways," "The Value of an Ideal," "Brute or Brother," "The Prince of Peace." The latter was probably his most popular platform subject. At the end of his flaming peroration, his quotation from William Cullen Bryant's "To a Waterfowl" unfailingly left his audience in a state of ecstasy:

He who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,  
In the long way that I must tread alone,  
Will lead my steps aright.

Sometimes this master of the platform art would give his auditors a choice of subject. At Waterloo, Iowa, in 1917, for example, he asked for a show of hands as to whether he should speak on "The Making of a Man," "Equal Suffrage," or "The Liquor Question." It was symptomatic of Midwest social morality that the last mentioned was the overwhelming preference, whereupon he proceeded to "flay the liquor interests unmercifully."

Powerful currents of idealism and inspiration flowed through Bryan's utterances whether the theme was politics or religion. During the latter part of his chautauqua career he had much to say about the Darwinian hypothesis. He held it in detestation and opposed it bitterly. At the close of one of his general lectures during the early nineteen twenties in a small South Dakota town, the present writer heard him say: "And now, ladies and gentlemen, I am sure you would be disappointed if I did not say something about the subject that has somehow become associated with my name—the false doctrine of organic evolution." He ridiculed the concept

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 26:8-9 (July, 1916).

<sup>39</sup> Charles Edward Russell, *Bare Hands and Stone Walls* (New York, 1933), 320.

and poured satire and scorn on the scientists and pedagogues who taught it. Referring to his opponents, who charged that he was not competent to speak on the subject because he lacked the training that would entitle him to a serious hearing, he confided to his audience that he was the possessor of a large number of academic degrees (most of them *honoris causa*, however), and that some day he would have a calling card printed with his degree abbreviations attached to his name. He would send it, he said, to all his critics, and "challenge every son of an ape to match it if he can." In his battle against evolution he gave his life, as he struck his last ineffective blow in the Tennessee "monkey trial" in 1925.

Bryan gave an enormous amount of his chautauqua energy to the Middle West and was a very frequent visitor in Iowa. In the community of Clarinda alone he stood upon the platform seven times between 1897 and 1922.<sup>40</sup> During the first four of these, nature was in stormy mood, yet the attendance was record breaking on each occasion. Frequently, Bryan's visit to a community was considered such an event that a "special day" was proclaimed in his honor as, for example, his visit to Oskaloosa in 1905:

Today was Bryan Day at the Oskaloosa Chautauqua, and the capacity of the facilities at the grounds were tested to their utmost in caring for the crowds. The distinguished Nebraska orator drew people for many miles, and excursion rates were given on all railways. All roads led to Oskaloosa, and while the day was hot and threatening, hundreds took advantage of the opportunity to hear the twice candidate for president and hero of the silver wing of the Democratic party. . . . The lecture of Mr. Bryan was upon the theme, "The Value of an Ideal." The gentleman, always an excellent talker, has combined much of excellence in his talk. He pleads for the higher, better politics. Words are plentiful with the son of Nebraska; they fall from his lips as water pours over Niagara. . . . The ease with which he speaks is in itself an entertainment, and not one of the audience that filled the tent and crowded about the exterior was not pleased with the talk. Mr. Bryan's lecture occupied the greater part of the afternoon . . .<sup>41</sup>

The type of instruction and entertainment that, summer after summer, swept through the chautauqua tents of Iowa and all other commonwealths may be well illustrated by the bill of fare presented at the Le Mars chautauqua in July, 1916. The program proper was preceded by a children's

<sup>40</sup> Waterman, "A History of the Chautauqua at Clarinda, Iowa," 69.

<sup>41</sup> Oskaloosa *Daily Herald*, July 15, 1905.

parade beginning at the railroad station as the assembly supervisor stepped off the train. A marching band, flags, and banners featured the procession. Plans for the children were included in every day's activities. In the mornings the "Tell Me a Story Lady" brought hero tales of wild adventure and noble striving. There were games, athletics, field trips, and picnics. In this year when the land was resounding with the presidential campaign cry that "Wilson kept us out of war," the management was convinced that every one of the children "will be mighty glad to dress up in special costume and take part in a spectacular international pageant on the big chautauqua platform the last night [in which the costumed characters were to be] Indians, Puritans, Colonial maidens, soldiers, George Washington, Columbia, Uncle Sam, and children of all nations."

The formal program was as follows:

TENTH ANNIVERSARY REDPATH-VAWTER CHAUTAUQUA SYSTEM

LE MARS, July 2-8, 1916

MOTT SAWYER — Superintendent

LETA BONNIFIELD — Play Specialist

PROGRAMS BEGIN PROMPTLY

BE ON TIME

SUNDAY

Half Past Two

Opening Exercises and Important Announcements

Opening Program

The Kellogg-Haines Singing Party

With the classiest opening concert you ever heard

Three O'Clock

Chaplain E. H. Lougher

A vigorous and searching address on "The Shackles of the World"

Admission 35 cents

Four O'Clock

Vesper Service

Half Past Seven

The Kellogg-Haines Singing Party

In songs of sincere purpose and great beauty

Admission 35 cents

MONDAY

Nine O'Clock

The Junior Chautauqua

"Tell Me A Story Lady" in journey to the Lower World.

Rehearsal and Games

Half Past Two

The McGrath Brothers

The boys who discovered what a banjo was really made for

Three O'Clock            Henry Augustus Adrian  
 Recounting the marvelous discoveries of Luther Burbank, the  
 wizard of the plant world

Admission 35 cents

Half Past Seven            The McGrath Brothers  
 They play the big, fine music on the old banjo

Quarter Past Eight            Col. George W. Bain  
 A veteran Southern orator beloved by millions. For twenty-  
 five years a headliner.

Admission 35 cents

#### TUESDAY

Nine O'Clock            The Junior Chautauqua  
 A trip to the jungles of Africa. More games

Ten O'Clock            George E. Colby  
 Cartoonist of Chicago Daily News in useful demonstration  
 and study of Modern Art

Admission 25 cents

Half Past Two  
 The Royal Gwent Welsh Glee Singers  
 A man's musical from the land of famous singers

Three O'Clock            Hon. Chas. F. Scott  
 Ex-Congressman from Kansas who will tell the "Real Truth  
 About Mexico"

Admission 35 cents

Half Past Seven  
 The Royal Gwent Welsh Glee Singers  
 Fourteen big male voices presenting the best that musical  
 literature affords

Admission 50 cents

#### WEDNESDAY

Nine O'Clock            The Junior Chautauqua  
 Fairyland by daylight. Wienie roast

Ten O'Clock            Mrs. Nan Sperry  
 Assistant Labor Commissioner of Missouri in  
 searching address on social problems

Admission 25 cents

Half Past Two            The Philipinos  
 A classy quintette from the other side of the world  
 Brand new and full of vigor

Three O'Clock            Opie Read  
 In sublime characterization of "Old Lim Jucklin," the quaint  
 character revealing Read at his very best

Admission 35 cents



- Half Past Seven                      The Philipinos  
     With superb musical selections both native and American
- Quarter Past Eight                  Bishop Homer C. Stuntz  
     Resident Bishop of South America in valuable study of that  
     remarkable country and people  
     Admission 50 cents

## THURSDAY

- Nine O'Clock                      The Junior Chautauqua  
     The Real World from the lips of the "Tell Me a Story Lady"
- Ten O'Clock                      Dr. E. A. Brinton  
     Formerly of Paraguay, "The Land of War and Women,"  
     which he describes with thrilling interest  
     Admission 25 cents
- Half Past Two                      Bohumir Kryl and His Big Band  
     The music of the masses served in delightful fashion and  
     thrilling power  
     Admission 50 cents
- Half Past Seven                      Bohumir Kryl and His Big Band  
     The tenth anniversary festival of melody setting a new pace  
     in musical entertainment. Greatest of all Chautauqua attrac-  
     tions  
     Admission 50 cents

## FRIDAY

- Nine O'Clock                      The Junior Chautauqua  
     Final Rehearsal and Field Meet
- Ten O'Clock                      Dr. C. C. Mitchell  
     "The Story of an Ash Heap" a delightful study of the world's  
     most ancient drama  
     Admission 25 cents
- Half Past Two                      Chautauqua Concert Party  
     Musicians of quality in program of rich variety and peculiar  
     charm
- Three O'Clock                      Gov. Malcolm R. Patterson  
     One of America's ablest orators who discusses "The Mind  
     of the Nation"  
     Admission 35 cents
- Half Past Seven                      Laurant and Concert Party  
     In a full evening of magic, mystery and music. The crowning  
     success of magical achievement  
     Admission 50 cents

## SATURDAY

Half Past Two                      Ada Roach and Company  
     Unique and clever musical and literary treat by a sextette  
     of platform stars

Three O'Clock                      George L. McNutt  
     The preacher who became a laborer to study the problems  
     of the working man

Admission 35 cents

Half Past Seven                      World Wide Peace  
     A spectacular International Pageant by the Children of the  
     Junior Chautauqua

Eight O'Clock                      Ada Roach and Company  
     Introducing in delightful style the specially written musical  
     comedy, "The Heart of the Immigrant." They will show you  
     the time of your life

Quarter to Nine                      W. J. Bryan  
     With a characteristic Bryan address  
     Admission 35 cents

Note: Each musical company has an appropriate Sunday  
     Program

Following the close of World War I the chautauqua movement, with the exception of the great original in New York, entered upon a state of decline. The war years had been a period of great vigor, as chautauqua managers and speakers undertook to sustain the war effort. The issues of the conflict were explained, patriotism promoted, enlistment in the forces encouraged, and purchase of war bonds commended.

"The Chautauquas of the country have heard the call to service," it was announced in 1918. "The Government has recognized the vast and perhaps vital importance of the great Chautauqua movement. President Wilson urges that 'the people will not fail in the support of a patriotic institution [chautauqua] that may be said to be an integral part of the National defense.'"<sup>42</sup>

Many of the programs of the fighting years were aimed at assisting "chautauqua to make its full contribution to winning the war."<sup>43</sup> On the Waterloo chautauqua program in 1918, lectures were given on "Our Task for the World," "Arming Society's Reserves," "War and the Wages of Women" (Round Table), "Convalescent Hospital Work at Fort Des

<sup>42</sup> Foreword to the 1918 Program Booklet of the Waterloo, Iowa, Chautauqua.

<sup>43</sup> *Idem*.

Moines," "Waterloo Chapter of the Red Cross" (Round Table), "How Shall We Fill the Trenches" (Round Table). A returning observer spoke on "Conditions in the War Zone," and the Overseas Military Quartette — "back from Hell and still singing" — brought a "real trench atmosphere" to the chautauqua tent, with "trench songs and the story of their fights."<sup>44</sup>

The loss of wartime fervor was not the only factor contributing to the decline of chautauqua. New inventions and the social changes that followed them had heavy bearing on the fortunes of this folk movement. Among these were the motion picture which, in many instances, made its first appearance in the local community by way of the chautauqua tent. Waiting until the next season for the return of this marvel was an intolerable delay, and enterprising exhibitors began to install themselves in vacant store buildings, the back end of professional garages, and other enclosures; such temporary arrangements served the public until the coming of the motion picture theaters.

The invention of the radio likewise proved to be a force in the decline of chautauqua's popularity. Out of the crackling and static of the early crystal sets presently emerged a comprehensible pattern of human voices and musical sounds, the ultimate material components of a chautauqua program. In due time the instructional and entertainment content of the air waves was instantly available to the public upon the turning of a dial. With the broadcasting of Calvin Coolidge's inaugural address in March, 1925, radio may be said to have become an established social device.

Both the motion picture and the radio made an enormous breach in the insularity of the people of interior America. As previously indicated, chautauqua was an affair not of the urban centers but of the rural regions. Slow means of transportation and soft roads, often impassable in bad weather, set sharp limits upon the range of movement, thought, and social and cultural experience. But this condition, weakened and ameliorated by movie and radio, was substantially dissolved by the invention of the gasoline engine, the development of the automobile, and the improved road system that inevitably followed. With 7,000,000 passenger cars on the highways in 1919, and more than 23,000,000 in 1929,<sup>45</sup> Americans were no longer bound to their home communities but, independent of railroad schedules, could travel at will over their continent. In the rural towns and districts

<sup>44</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>45</sup> Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday* (New York, 1931), 7.

where a high percentage of the motor cars was to be found, summertime became vacation time, and, freed from reliance on chautauqua for relief from monotonous toil and routine, farmers, merchants, and their families set out for the national parks and other pleasant objectives, often at the very time the great tents and the stream of talent were coming to town. Money was not as freely spent on season tickets, but was husbanded for vacation journeys when the crops were gathered in.

In the light of these historic alterations, it is no wonder that chautauqua found itself sorely beset in the years following World War I. It was not that the people were turning from the values the institution afforded, but rather that these had been made accessible through different channels.

Attendance fell off both through season ticket and single admission sales, and platform superintendents found it increasingly difficult to persuade the local committees to sign renewal contracts for the following season. It was the pride of the superintendent to achieve such renewal before a chautauqua completed its program in each individual town on his circuit. To fail in this was to suffer humiliation in the esteem of the bureau management.

But, with the increased opportunities presented by the new inventions, and the consequent change in traditional social patterns, chautauqua was clearly a declining institution. Newspaper editors who had once cheerfully printed the laudatory "copy" lavishly supplied by the managers, now became critical of "outside organizations which took large amounts of money out of town," and ceased to lend their powerful aid to the maintenance of chautauqua sentiment in the rural communities. When it became difficult or impossible to find enough guarantors to risk twenty-five or fifty dollars to assure the minimum cost of the season's activities in the individual towns, the last of the main props supporting the institution had been withdrawn. By the middle twenties, Keith Vawter told the author, "the handwriting was on the wall," and in 1926 he disposed of his circuit holdings.

Chautauqua did not experience a sudden collapse; rather, it faded gradually from the American scene. Valiant efforts to save it by the bureau managers and by many local devotees, who could not be reconciled to its departure, prolonged its existence into the thirties, and some units continued stubbornly into the forties. Here and there, spectacular upsurges of loyalty and vigor were experienced, and hope for the future was revived. But even as in the present time television draws its increasing multitudes away from the motion picture and the radio, so these latter, two decades



ago, contributed powerfully to the decline and disappearance of chautauqua.

But the memory of that vanished wonder lingers on. Countless individuals look back with deepening nostalgia upon the years when it flourished in all its garish glory. Well remembered are the winter months of dreaming of the returning summer days that would bring chautauqua back to town to repeat the sequence of exciting events: the coming of the advance agent to work with the committee in planning the drive for season ticket sales; putting display cards in store windows and tacking them on telephone and electric light poles; hanging an enormous banner across Main Street; checking on the condition of Chautauqua Park where the actual drama would unfold.

With the coming of the big tent, excitement mounted to the sky, and the greater part of the population turned out to see the tent crew (often college boys enjoying this sort of summer-time employment) pound the pegs in place, raise the big top, erect the platform, set up the chairs and benches, and make all ready for the arrival of the superintendent and the talent.

The performers inspired wonder and awe. Overlooked was their weariness and travel-worn appearance. Even their progress to the mean hotel off Main Street or the spectacle of their eating at the counter of the Royal Cafe failed to dispel illusion. To dwellers in the hinterland, they were artists from another world. Presently they would stand upon the platform, authoritative and glamorous, to move and delight the multitude.

While no section of the United States was unaware of this extraordinary social phenomenon, the region of its greatest concentration was the Midwest, and Iowa was the center of circuit activity. Chautauqua was good for the people, and they received it gladly. It kindled a light each summer in rural America, and its afterglow was a wealth of treasured memories that brightened the ensuing winter. Not only did it enrich the social experience of its host of devoted followers, it also broadened their intellectual and aesthetic horizons, for within those enormous tents they heard better speaking, listened to finer music, and saw more notable people than in all their previous existence. Nor can it ever be known how many found in it an influence that changed the very current of their lives. Having seen in some incident of the chautauqua season the lifted veil of beauty, or caught from a vibrant speaker the accent of inspiration, they sensed as never before the world of poetry and action, and were swept from narrow moorings to voyages of discovery and achievement.

## SOCIAL LIFE OF AN IOWA FARM FAMILY, 1873-1912

By Merrill E. Jarchow

The diary of Miss Sarah Jane Kimball, which formed the basis for an article in the October, 1951, issue of the JOURNAL,<sup>1</sup> makes it difficult to escape the conclusion that farm women of her time inherited a harsh and dreary existence; yet, in spite of the space in the diary devoted to accounts of labor, one does not come away from it with the feeling of depression left by books such as *Giants in the Earth* or *Wind Without Rain*. An atmosphere of gentility and a leisurely tempo seem to characterize the life of the period. Surely there was an endless round of chores to be done, but usually there was time for a nap in the afternoon or for a visit with friends. A major impression left by the diary is that of a large stream of neighbors, relatives, and transients stopping at the Kimball home. If the Kimballs endured hardships, as it may seem to us today, at least they had few occasions to suffer from loneliness.

Some typical excerpts from the diary will illustrate the point. Sarah Jane wrote in 1874:

This morning while I was in the granary busily at work on my bedstead, I looked out of the window and saw a load of women and little children stop at the barn then come in, I went down and saw that it was Mrs. Horton and 5 children, Mrs. Mullett and Ida and Mrs. Tabor. I was glad to see them but thought it quite a crowd. and Clemie was here too. We had a good visit and the little folks had a good time. They were here at dinner and supper. They went away at about sunset.

In February, 1875, "the school teacher came to stay all night, at about 8 oclock a company of 11 persons came from Wyoming. . . . We spent a pleasant evening. They went away late." An entry of 1895 reads:

Wednesday while I was finishing the ironing, a buggy stopped out at the gate and Mrs. Dodge and George Lewis and his wife got out and came in. They were here for dinner. After dinner we had

<sup>1</sup> Merrill E. Jarchow, "Life on a Jones County Farm, 1873-1912," IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY, 49:311-38 (October, 1951).

a chance to visit. At about three oclock a carriage drove in and Mrs. Wilken and Mrs. Chamberlain got out. They stayed two hours and then went away. The others were here for supper. We had a pleasant visit with all.

And finally, by way of illustration, in 1907: "Today they have all been here . . . fifteen in all." As enjoyable as the visiting was, it became burdensome at times, especially when it meant extra work, as it usually did, and an interruption of chores which needed to be done. "Mother and I were bothered," wrote Sarah Jane after entertaining company. "So much work to do and so many to wait on." At another time she complained: "We were very tired but had to get supper for them. Too tired to enjoy their company." Once in a while it was even difficult to be pleasant: "They came in and mother felt out of sorts at seeing them. We have had so many of the relations here during the hot weather and others to work for that we were not glad to see them." Generally speaking, however, company was most welcome and thoroughly enjoyed, a state of affairs which probably goes far in explaining the large number of people who flocked to the Kimball home.<sup>2</sup>

Frequently, as would be expected, the Kimballs repaid the visits made to their home. One cold, blustery day in 1875, "Uncle John, Aunt Lucy, Uncle Spencer, Aunt Maria, Father, Mother and I all went to Will Alspaugh's to visit. We rode in Uncle John's sleigh. We had a pleasant time and ate supper by lamp light. It was dark and cold when we came away." On this particular occasion Sarah Jane and her parents visited friends and relatives in Anamosa for several days. Visiting in the home neighborhood was, of course, more common than going as far away as Anamosa. One evening, "Marshall and Rena and Foster Bruntlett and Sarah Lewis and I went to Willard Niles. . . . We found them all sitting around the table reading the papers. . . . They seemed glad to see us and we spent a pleasant evening. Hiram and Mary brought out their games Mrs. Niles brought out their albums and stereoscopic views. We stayed until about 11 oclock then came away." Staying up so late, it might be noted in passing, was the exception not the rule; nine o'clock was the usual hour for retiring and

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Jane Kimball Diary, Jan. 9, Feb. 27, Sept. 1, 1874; Feb. 24, 1875; Jan. 18, Aug. 7, Sept. 5, 1877; Nov. 17, 1878; Jan. 31, 1879; May 8, 1881; June 8, 1884; Jan. 11, Mar. 1, May 2, 1885; Aug. 15, 1886; June 29, 1890; June 28, Nov. 8, 1891; June 30, 1895; Dec. 3, 1899; Sept. 21, 28, 1902; June 23, 1907. (This diary is in the possession of the author, Merrill E. Jarchow, of Northfield, Minn.)



when the hour was later than that, Sarah Jane made mention of the fact.<sup>3</sup>

Peddlers were frequent callers at the Kimballs', bringing news of the outside world and displaying wares of one sort and another. Most of them appeared to be welcome, but on at least one occasion Sarah Jane took a dislike to an agent. "A smooth talker," she characterized him. "I didn't buy." In the spring of 1874, two men "were peddling stove pipe shelves. They will stay tonight." Later in the year, "Mrs. Waite came to show us a book that she was the agent for. She came up the ladder and leaned over the crib and showed the book and talked. Ellen went in the house and signed for one." Not long thereafter: "An agent with samples of groceries here today. We signed for some raisins, tea and box of soap." In May, 1878, "a map peddler came along and wanted to stay all night. We kept him. He showed us his map this morning and father concluded to take one. He is a very pleasant and intelligent old gentleman and his name is Allison." During the fall of that year: "A stranger came to sell a wire straightener and will stay tonight." Map peddlers and book agents were particularly numerous. One of the latter in 1881 was a "dealer in freethought books, pictures etc. Stayed all night and is an interesting talker. John Ann and Fred came in to hear him." On several occasions vendors of eye spectacles stopped by. In 1887, the "peddler Goldstone came and stayed until after dinner. Sold us two watches a silver and a gold one, a cashmere dress and some stockings. Sold me one of his notes for \$27. Friday Ora Tompkins came and sold mother a \$2.00 book called 'Man.'" Several months later, "Goldstone came with his cousin. They stayed about two hours and traded a gold watch for Merrill's silver one and Merrill paid the difference in price. He gave me a charm for mine. Goldstone talked much and made fun for us all." Once when Sarah Jane and her mother were piling wood in the woodhouse, "a peddler of shawls came along. She bought one." The next three peddlers were selling beadwork, bedspreads, and fancy wall ornaments respectively. One of the last, a Columbus ship, caught Mrs. Kimball's eye and she purchased it. After the turn of the century the Rawleigh man enters the picture. In 1905, the "agent came and left some medicine for our keeping his horses in our barn." The scissors and knife grinder was another familiar figure. Once in a while Sarah Jane was given to haggling over prices. Thus: "Early in the morning a peddler came with dress goods.

<sup>3</sup> Diary, Jan. 30, Mar. 10, 1875; Feb. 10, May 16, 1877; Jan. 15, 1878; May 30, 1879; June 19, 1904.



I did not want anything but he was a Jew and had a fine piece of goods for a waist which he offered at first for three dollars then came down to one dollar and I took it. . . ." In one of the final entries in the diary, Sarah Jane tells of the visit of a junkman: "Just before noon a junk man came and took our old stove away. Merrill and Marshall helped him get it out of the cellar. He also took all of the old rubbers and a pile of old papers."<sup>4</sup>

Planned and organized social functions as distinct from the informal get-togethers and social intercourse of everyday routine played a relatively small part in the life of the Kimball family. This fact is not surprising when it is remembered that the youngest member of the family, Ellen, was already twenty years old when Sarah Jane's diary begins; Sarah Jane herself was in her middle thirties. In 1874 mention is made of Merrill's fiddling at a dance, but apparently he did little with his violin after the 1870's. From then until 1909 when Sarah Jane's ward, Esther, was being courted, the word "dance" seldom appears in the diary. Rag bees, at which ladies sewed up rags for carpets, and quilting bees occurred once in a while in the early years, as did barn raisings, sleighing parties, and Sunday school picnics. One of the last was described by Sarah Jane in 1874.

We started and joined another sunday school a mile from here and all went together two miles and joined another. Three sunday schools were to have a picnic on the bank of the Wapsie under the trees near old mill pond. It was a pleasant place and a long table was covered with plenty of good things. Some seats a desk and rostrum were built near and we had singing and speaking. Then came the dinner and all seemed to enjoy it. Then there were songs. . . . When we got home we found father busy stringing apples. I felt sick.<sup>5</sup>

After 1902, when Esther came to live at the Kimball home, entries concerning children's parties, and later basket socials, girls' parties, and dances once more find their way into the diary. In 1909 at a party at Aldens' "Esther's basket sold the highest \$2.90."

<sup>4</sup> Diary, Feb. 27, May 22, Oct. 28, Nov. 6, 1874; Nov. 5, 10, 1875; July 13, 1877; May 4, 11, 26, 1878; Dec. 18, 1881; Oct. 18, 1885; Dec. 4, 1887; Apr. 15, 1888; Nov. 11, 1889; June 1, 1890; Feb. 8, 1891; Mar. 6, 1892; Oct. 13, 1895; May 17, 1896; July 1, 1900; Aug. 25, 1901; Dec. 31, 1905; Feb. 17, 1907; Jan. 5, July 5, 1908; Aug. 8, Sept. 12, 19, 1909; Mar. 19, 1911; Aug. 11, 1912.

<sup>5</sup> Diary, Feb. 24, June 8, Sept. 12, 1874; Apr. 7, June 14, 1875; Jan. 27, 28, 1877; May 31, 1896; Sept. 14, 1902; Feb. 1, 1903; Sept. 12, 19, Dec. 19, 1909; Aug. 21, 1910.

Wyoming, small as it was, provided many social opportunities, and trips there for business and for pleasure were frequent affairs. Once in a while Hale, four miles to the south, was visited, mainly for the purposes of gathering shells by the river and making social calls. Although the farm was in many respects self-sufficient, some items had to be purchased in town. Throughout the diary, Sarah Jane lists various purchases, such as sugar, coffee, raisins, allspice, flour, dry goods, furniture, carpets, wall paper, yarn, rubber boots, books, implements, stoves, lamps, coal, lumber, tile, clothes, curtains, mirrors, wagons, buggies, sleighs, candy, pens, pencils, phonographs, magazines, washboards, wringers, pails, and "other things." Usually most of the stores in town were visited and the best bargain secured. On at least one occasion bargaining apparently led to ill feeling, for Sarah Jane wrote:

This morning Father mother and I went to town. I have made up my mind to go to Chicago with Merrill and went to get a new alpacca dress. Went to see if Miss Duncan would make it and said she would. Went to Richards and looked then to Loomis'. Richards had the best for the price and Loomis lost his temper. Came home just before noon.

Unpleasant relationships were rare, however, and the stores at Wyoming were about as important as social centers, where one could meet friends and pick up the latest news, as they were providers of articles for purchase and as markets where butter and eggs could be traded in. While in town shopping the Kimballs usually made social calls, too. For example, in 1877, "I took a geranium to Mrs. Hunter and she gave me a slip of her white one that she had started. . . . We called at the Foote house to learn that the boys got home safe last night." On another trip, ". . . then to the P. O. then to Mrs. Littles to wait for father, I staid [sic] about an hour and visited then he was ready. He had on a load of bricks and lath." And, as a final example: "I got the glass and then did some other shopping then as I had to wait for father I went to see Mrs. Estelle Wherry. It was so cool and nice there. She got dinner and waited a little for father. . . ." Until 1901 trips to town also meant visits to the postoffice for letters, packages, newspapers, magazines, seeds, and flower bulbs. In December of that year rural free delivery came to Madison Township, but Sarah Jane's only comment at the time was: "Our rural mail wagon started." Even after that, trips had to be made to the depot to pick up heavy packages sent out by Mont-

gomery Ward and Company and Sears Roebuck and Company. Perhaps the Kimballs dealt with Montgomery Ward during the late nineteenth century, but if so, no mention was made of the fact in the diary. The first notice of a transaction came in 1902, when Sarah Jane ordered a music box, a family grindstone, books, and "other things" from Montgomery Ward. In 1906 she noted the receipt of a lawn mower, a grit box for poultry, and a blue flame stove and oven from Sears Roebuck. Unfortunately the oven was damaged and had to be returned. Three years later she recorded the receipt of photographs, brooches, and records from the latter company. A final entry on the subject, in January, 1911, tells of the sending of a grocery order to Montgomery Ward.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to serving as a business and social center for the Kimballs and other farm folk, Wyoming offered special attractions from time to time for the edification and enjoyment of the community. Circuses came to town each summer and nearly always several members of the Kimball family went to see the sights. In 1874 Van Amburgh's combined menagerie and circus drew mention. "The crowd assembled around the tents was large," wrote Sarah Jane. "When we went in we found a good collection of animals. Some strange ones. The circus was not as good as some only where the little dogs performed. That was about the cutest thing I ever saw." Another entry reads:

The big show was in town. John Ann & Fred came along with their team and I got ready to go with them. Ellen came with the baby to go too. . . . We watched the big show parade along the street, from the windows. . . . Then we went to Pawson's for dinner. After that we went to see the show. Was interested in the performances. Many people there. We stayed to the concert. That didn't pay.

A few years later the family went to see Van Amburgh's show again. There was a large crowd and the collection of animals was good; "the lions were especially fine." In the circus division the "acting was all very good and some of it extra." By 1898, circuses had lost some of their thrill for Sarah

<sup>6</sup> Diary, June 12, 1875; Dec. 1, 5, 15, 1877; Jan. 29, Feb. 16, 27, Mar. 16, Apr. 11, July 12, Sept. 6, 1878; Apr. 12, 1879; Nov. 9, 1880; Mar. 19, Oct. 17, 20, 31, 1882; Nov. 30, 1884; Apr. 12, 1885; Jan. 3, Aug. 8, 1886; July 8, 1888; Apr. 22, Dec. 22, 29, 1889; Jan. 11, 1891; Dec. 4, 1892; Jan. 22, 1893; June 23, 1895; Dec. 4, 18, 1898; June 30, Dec. 8, 1901; Feb. 9, 23, 1902; Feb. 8, 1903; Aug. 14, Dec. 4, 11, 1904; May 13, 1906; Jan. 6, 1907; Aug. 1, 1909; Nov. 13, 1910; Jan. 29, 1911.



Jane. "There was some good balancing on the slack rope and with plates and sticks and the horseback riding was good," she remarked of a circus in that year. "We enjoyed it some but the keen pleasure of the thing has worn off." Nevertheless, she continued to go to circuses and as late as 1911 she admitted, after seeing one, that the "trapeze performance was fine."<sup>7</sup>

Occasionally Sarah Jane went to a theatrical performance or to a concert in Wyoming. "This evening," she wrote in 1875, "Marshall went after Rena Lewis and Ellen and I went with them to Wyoming to hear the Bell Ringers. Williams hall was filled and the night was warm. We enjoyed the performances very much especially that where Mr Harry Eades took part. He was a comic. It was late when we got home and very dark." A decade later, the Kimballs and their in-laws, the Conneys and the Bruntletts, went to hear Smiths' bell players in the Opera Hall in town. There was a big crowd and a rush as soon as the door opened, but Sarah Jane secured a good place to sit. The Smiths "played with the bells and on goblets and on bowls with sticks. The little dwarfs danced several times and with such skill and agility. They had some singing and acting and altogether we felt paid for going. The hall was crowded. We got home at five minutes to eleven oclock." A pianist known as Blind Boone appeared in Wyoming from time to time, and he seemed to enjoy considerable popularity. After hearing him one evening in 1887, Sarah Jane noted: "The Hall was filled and the playing was wonderful. Such music as could be made by a genius only." Eight years later in speaking of Boone again, she wrote: "Opera Hall was crowded. Blind Boone played and sang much as he did before and all were charmed with his wonderful melody. Stella May has improved much in style and song. The audience never tires of her. The concert was all too short. We arrived at home at 15 minutes past 10 oclock." In 1906 Sarah Jane mentions another Blind Boone concert, but she did not attend it. Stage plays either were rare in Wyoming or they held little appeal for the Kimballs, since Sarah Jane comments on only two of them. In 1890 with her sister and niece she went to see *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at the Opera Hall. Her remarks were brief indeed: "Very poor actors and uninteresting." A year later she and Merrill went to the new Opera Hall to see *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, but it must have made slight impression on her because she made no comment whatsoever on it. In 1911 she made note of the fact that Esther

<sup>7</sup> Diary, Oct. 1, 1874; Aug. 22, 1879; June 17, 1883; Sept. 22, 1889; July 26, 1891; July 10, 1892; Oct. 2, 1898; Aug. 16, 1908; July 23, 1911.



attended a moving picture show, but there is no indication in the diary that Sarah Jane herself ever went to a movie.<sup>8</sup>

Two events in Wyoming between 1873 and 1912, the first destructive and the second constructive, drew the attention of the whole community and the surrounding rural area; the first was the fire of 1877, and the second was the celebration in 1905 of the town's fiftieth birthday. As would be expected, Sarah Jane noted both events. The fire occurred on Sunday, September 30, "a very warm windy day." It was called to the attention of the Kimballs by a neighbor at about two o'clock in the afternoon.

The men hurried and got ready hitched the team to the buggy and went there. Mother and I went to Pelky's to see a little better and Mrs. P. and Alice brought out some chairs and we sat and watched it. . . . Our folks came back at about 5 oclock and told us what was burned. The fire was subdued when they came away. It started on the south side of main street in Hagen's livery stable burning it down also the Madison building and Foote House and some smaller buildings. The Johnson Block and Crisick's barn were injured some but the men worked and saved it. On the south side several buildings were burned. . . . Most of the merchants and druggists on main street moved their goods out of their stores to a safe place from the fire and many things were stolen. It was a scene of utter confusion. Many poor folks were turned out of a home. What a sad event for Wyoming.

By 1905 most folks in Wyoming had probably forgotten the fire as they concentrated on celebrating the town's birthday. "Today the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the starting of Wyoming commences. Esther went with John and Ann. It will continue three days," wrote Sarah Jane on Sunday, August 6. The next day Merrill and Esther were in town all day, but Sarah Jane did not go until Tuesday.

I went to the Semi-Centennial celebration. It was held in a large tent east of the schoolhouse. The streets of Wyoming were in gala attire. We heard music by the bands and singing and a good letter read from Geo. E. Delevan in California and two good speeches from Dillon Bronson and a lawyer Tom Milner. . . . Evening Merrill and I went to W. again to see the fireworks and streets illuminated. It was fine. Many people on the streets. We stayed until after nine. Wednesday felt used up.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Diary, Aug. 27, 1875; Sept. 28, 1884; Apr. 6, Nov. 13, 1887; Aug. 5, 1888; Jan. 5, 1890; Feb. 15, 1891; Oct. 20, 1895; Apr. 8, 1906; March 5, 1911.

<sup>9</sup> Diary, Sept. 30, 1877; Aug. 6, 13, 1905.

Next in importance to Wyoming as a social center outside the home, so far as the Kimballs were concerned, was the district schoolhouse, where a variety of entertainment was provided. Each winter until at least 1885 lyceums were regular attractions there. One of the first of these mentioned in the diary was a debate on the subject "Grasshopper Sufferers." According to Sarah Jane, "The debate was lively and interesting and we stayed late." A year later she wrote: "In the evening we all went to the schoolhouse to hear the debate. The house was filled. Had recitations and readings and a song before recess. Marshall and Ellen sang 'Not for Joe.' The debate was on 'Women's Rights.' Sure excitement in their talk." On another occasion Sarah Jane participated in a lyceum program, but she gave only a modest account of her role, stating: "I read a piece called 'We reap what we sow.'" Her last notice of a lyceum reads: "After supper we all went to the Lyceum. . . . The schoolhouse was full. We had a number of interesting pieces." One evening the Kimballs drove to the small town of Olin to hear a Mrs. Parry speak in the schoolhouse there on the subject, "Crime — Its Cause and Punishment." Sarah Jane found the speaker able and the lecture very interesting. On the way home the Kimballs forded the river in the company of the Newells and the Vans. Said Sarah Jane: "Mrs. Van was merry." Another schoolhouse attraction, common especially in the 1870's, was the spelling school. Sarah Jane tells of attending one at which she "found a rough sett [sic] of scholars there. They spelled down then spoke some pieces." On the last day of school each term it was customary to have an entertainment by the scholars for visitors, and Sarah Jane went to a large number of these affairs until at least 1908. One in 1874 took the form of a picnic. "A platform was built up where the children spoke their pieces," wrote Sarah Jane. "Some good ones. Many people there to see. Then came the dinner and enough for all. We had a pleasant social time." Some years later the teacher "had recitations and dialogues after recess. They were interesting." In 1879 Sarah Jane gave high praise to the exercises planned by the teacher Mary Niles.

It is the last day of Mary Niles school and most of the neighbors went we among the rest. The house was nicely trimmed with evergreens and Hattie Shaffer's organ was there. Mr. Verne Hopkins came and brought his accordion. Some of the girls from over on the Ridge came and helped Hattie sing. Allie Van and Jennie Niles helped sing and play. Mary had her scholars trained nicely to answer questions. There were many good pieces spoken and

acted. We all enjoyed the exercises very much. Mary seemed pleased and tired.

During the exercises in 1893 Sarah Jane lent a helping hand by turning the crank of the organette for music. From Sarah Jane's accounts it would seem that the farm men failed to attend the closing exercises in any numbers, but the farm women did attend them and they obviously enjoyed seeing each other as much as they enjoyed the programs themselves. On at least one occasion, in 1905, the school teacher organized a combined entertainment and basket party at which "baskets filled with all sorts of goodies" were sold to young men who had the privilege of eating with the girls whose baskets they purchased. Ellen, Charley, and Sarah Jane stayed at the party until eleven o'clock, but the young people "stayed an hour and half longer."<sup>10</sup>

Fairs of all sorts had a real attraction for the Kimballs, and much space is devoted to descriptions and accounts of them in the diary. Closest at hand, of course, were the annual county fairs held at Monticello, twenty miles north of Wyoming, and a year never passed that some, if not all, of the Kimballs did not go to the fair. Since Sarah Jane's narratives concerning her trips to county fairs are rather long, only one can be quoted, that of 1883, but it is typical of most of them.

Last Thursday morning was very pleasant and we arose early. I was to go to the county Fair at Monticello with Charly and Ellen. Merrill drove the team and took us to the Wyoming depot. Many people were there and most of them acquaintances. We waited nearly an hour when the train came along and then such a rush to get on. We had a nice ride and in an hour were at Monticello. Charly and Ellen separated at the depot and Ellen went with me. We first went to Mr. White's and left some of our things there then went to the Fair Ground and obtaining our tickets went in. We first went to the Hall and saw all that was there. The floral decorations were nice and the specimens of needlework. The display of fruits and vegetables was fine. We met several friends there and among the rest Jennie Meade. Leaving there we looked all over the grounds seeing all there was to be seen. The show of cattle and horses was large. At noon were tired and sat on the

<sup>10</sup> Diary, July 31, 1874; Feb. 9, 19, Aug. 8, 1875; Jan. 14, 1876; Mar. 14, 1877; Jan. 30, Feb. 27, Nov. 22, 1878; Mar. 18, 19, June 20, 1879; Mar. 1, 1885; July 4, 1886; Nov. 20, 1887; June 21, 1891; July 10, 1892; Mar. 12, Nov. 26, 1893; Feb. 26, 1899; June 17, 1900; Nov. 3, 1901; Mar. 15, Nov. 8, 1903; June 4, Oct. 29, 1905; Mar. 17, Nov. 10, Dec. 8, 1907; June 14, 1908.



grass to eat our lunch. After that walked again and looked to see how many people were there that we knew. A large crowd was on the ground. Saw Mrs. Noyes in the Hall. Out side we sat on the grass and watched the horse racing. At nearly three oclock we left the ground and called at Mr. White's to get our things then walked down town and went in many of the stores. . . . We went to an eating house and found Charly there and Ellen got her dinner. . . . at about five o'clock it began to rain. . . . A grand rush was made for the cars and they were so crowded that all could not find a seat. The storm increased as we moved south. . . . When we arrived at Wyoming . . . we went up town with the vivid lightning still playing around us. No one was there to meet us so we went to Mrs. Pawson's. She was very kind and we were obliged to stay there all night. In the morning early father came for us. . . .

When Sarah Jane went to the fair in 1888 a band met the group at the train in Monticello. That same year there were "many eating stands, and many games of chance" on the grounds. Some of the big attractions were a chariot race, a balloon ascension, a parachute jump, and horse racing. The fair of 1909 was not much of a success in Sarah Jane's opinion. The art hall was "nearly empty except of disappointed people. Several places of amusement were on the ground several eating stands some gambling places one big wheel and a merry go round. There was a little stock of inferior quality but I couldn't see it." Once more it rained, as it all too often did. Sarah Jane and Merrill arrived home at night after dark "very glad to get here."<sup>11</sup>

In the fine tradition of so many Iowa farmers, the Kimballs made numerous trips to the State Fair. On September 3, 1873, a Wednesday, Sarah Jane wrote: "Merrill went away yesterday to go to the State Fair at Cedar Rapids and today Father mother and I got ready to go. . . . Marshall and Ellen will take care of things while we are gone. We had a dusty ride and got to Anamosa before sundown. We staid at Uncle Spencer Alden's." The next day she continued:

We were at the depot in time to get our tickets for Cedar Rapids. The cars were full but we got a seat. On arriving at the Fair Ground we found a large crowd there. We went in and it looked much the same as it did when we were there two years before. The exhibition of things was fine. Floral Hall was filled with flow-

<sup>11</sup> Diary, Sept. 4, 1874; Sept. 6, 28, 1877; Sept. 4, 1879; Sept. 9, 1883; Sept. 2, 1888; Sept. 8, 1895; Sept. 5, 1909.



ers and plants that were beautiful to look at. Fine Art Hall was also filled with everything beautiful in its line and was crowded with people. Every department was well filled and we spent the day looking around. we got very tired. At about 5 oclock the cars came along. One last look over the grounds and at the moving mass of thirty thousand people and we were ready to go home. I had lost track of our folks and I boarded the first train going to Anamosa . . . it was just dark when we got there.<sup>12</sup>

After the State Fair was moved to Des Moines the Kimballs continued to attend it periodically: any one of Sarah Jane's stories of a trip to the Fair shows clearly the thrills and satisfactions such trips provided, as well as the large amount of energy they demanded. "Tuesday morning early Mr. Pelky drove us to the depot," begins her account of the Fair of 1886.

We boarded the train at half past six and as the morning was fine we had a nice ride to Melbourne. There we changed cars and went on the Diagonal road to Des Moines where was our destination. Stopping at the depot we waited until Merrill went out and found a boarding place which he did near by at the Gordon House. We took our things there and soon had dinner. After that we went and boarded the street car enroute for the Capitol Building. We spent the afternoon there looking at the beauty and grandeur there. Hundreds of people were there and the rattle of feet and hum of voices made the building roar. The building is grand in every way. . . . Oh we could not look enough. We ascended to the roof where we had a fine view of the city and its surroundings. . . . we took the street car and went back to our boarding place. . . . it rained all night and in the morning was still raining. When it stopped we went to the depot and took the steam cars for the Fair Ground. 50 cents to go in then much to look at. We visited the Exposition building and saw much to interest us; then the Horticultural Hall where we saw the beautiful plants and flowers. Then Agricultural Hall where we saw what Iowa has done this summer by the way of fruits and vegetables. We were surprised at the result. . . . We went to the machinery Halls one after the other and to see the buggies and wagons. It still rained and the ground was getting muddy. We visited the poultry house and saw some fine poultry and birds and four legged pets. Among them some skunks in a cage. Then we went back to Exposition Hall and waited for the rain to stop. We bought some shells. . . . We went to the dairy house and there I met Mrs. Lathrop and Mrs. Carter. Afterward went to see some of the fine

<sup>12</sup> Diary, Sept. 3, 4, 1873.

cattle and as night was close on us we went to the gate and boarded the cars. We went to a new boarding place farther up town. Evening very tired but went to the Opera where we saw a good play. Thursday morning raining but after waiting a little we went to see a little of the city. . . . Afterward took the horse cars and went to the Capitol where we met father and had a little lunch. Then mother and I went on an exploring expedition through the rooms. . . . Such carpets and curtains and furniture and decorations. It was like wonderland. Then I left father and mother and went higher and then up to the roof. . . . Such a view. Too great to comprehend. Then up another flight into the great dome where it was too hot to stay long. Then the long descent. . . . as we were all very tired we took the crowded street car for our place. We then picked our things ate our supper and started for the depot. Waited a little in a big crowd then boarded our train enroute for Melbourne. Missed it when we got there and backed out a quarter of a mile before we thought — then they stopped and we walked to the depot. Had to wait five hours there went to a hotel where we met others. The weather had changed and it became quite cold. The waiting was dreary. At one we left the hotel for the depot and at two the train came along. We got to Hale a little after sunrise. Mr. Pelky was there to meet us with the team and in due time we were home. Ann and her family were here and had our breakfast ready. How tired and worn out we were. Saturday felt no better and I had a cold. Sunday we rested.

But in spite of this rigorous experience the Kimballs did not lose their enthusiasm for the State Fair. While in Des Moines for the Fair of 1891, Sarah Jane was much impressed by the Zoological Gardens, the electric cars, a John Dillon play, colored lights illuminating part of the city at night, and the Capitol again where "in the Governor's room we saw the Governor." The return trip was as arduous as it had been in 1886. Leaving on a crowded train at six in the evening, Sarah Jane, her sister Ann, and her brother-in-law rode to Tama, where they waited until midnight when they boarded the "limited Express" for Marion. At Marion they had to wait from half past two until a quarter to five when they took another train for Hale. From Hale they walked, carrying their valises, the four miles home. In 1910 Marshall and Esther still had to take the train from Hale to Marion and so on to Des Moines when they went to the Fair.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Diary, Sept. 18, 1878; Sept. 13, 1885; Sept. 19, 1886; Sept. 6, 1891; Aug. 30, 1903; Sept. 3, 1905; Aug. 28, Sept. 4, 1910.

On at least five occasions, in 1881, 1889, 1890, 1892, and 1900, Sarah Jane visited the Mount Joy Fair at Davenport. During the 1881 trip she was accompanied by her sisters, Ann and Ellen.

The first thing we did, we followed the crowd of people through the streets towards the Fair ground. We walked and looked. Half way there we stopped at a place called the Academy of Sciences. Going on slowly we saw many fine residences. Arriving at the Fair Ground we bought our tickets and went in. We sat down on a bench and ate our lunch then walked around. The location of the grounds is beautiful. A fine artificial grove is in one corner and the rest smooth grass except now and then a clump of bushes. We first went to the great Hall where we saw many interesting and beautiful things. The Flowers and fountains the pictures and musical instruments the machines and needle work the fancy work and fruits and different displays all combined to make it very pleasant. We then walked around and looked at things outside and when we had seen all except the animals we left the grounds to take a look at the city.

When they returned to the depot they found they had missed their train by fifteen minutes; hence, they took another train to Delmar Junction, where they had to wait from twenty minutes past eight until five minutes before midnight before they boarded a train for Hale. From Hale they walked the four miles home "though we were all very tired." In 1889 Ellen and Sarah Jane "were disappointed in the show." The next year Sarah Jane, Ann, and two ladies from Wyoming went to Davenport, and the trip was more worth while. The first evening they "went to see the illumination. . . . It was a grand sight. Four big steamboats decorated with Chinese lanterns and numberless small boats. Besides rockets and Roman candles firing all the time. . . . A band of music played on one of the boats while the whistles sounded and many cannons were fired." The next day they went out to the fairgrounds, where they visited the Art Hall, the amphitheater, the chicken house, the bicycle races, and the cattle barn. They left the grounds "by way of the old beer garden," though it is doubtful that they sampled the beer.<sup>14</sup>

In March, 1885, Merrill went "to visit the great World's Fair at New

<sup>14</sup> Diary, Sept. 8, 1881; Sept. 15, 1889; Sept. 28, 1890; Oct. 9, 1892; Oct. 21, 1900. The District of Mount Joy consisted of Scott, Clinton, and Muscatine counties and was organized about 1870. The fairgrounds were located about six miles from Davenport. Report . . . *Iowa State Agricultural Society* . . . 1881, 368; *ibid.*, 1889, 374.



Orleans. We shall miss him." He was gone nearly four weeks touring the South. "He stayed nine days in New Orleans and two in Chicago," noted Sarah Jane. "He has enjoyed himself hugely. . . . Today Merrill showed us the things he brought back from the south. He bought some new books in Chicago and also a telescope a microscope and a sun glass for mother and a box of fancy hooks for me." A month later she told of "fixing up our new cabinet with the things that Merrill brought from New Orleans and other curiosities. It looked nicely. Mother helped arrange the things."<sup>15</sup>

One year the Kimballs decided to attend the Wisconsin State Fair at Milwaukee and to visit their old home, Troy Lakes; so in September, 1888, Sarah Jane, Ann, and their parents left Hale by train early on a Monday morning for Milwaukee. Tuesday morning "as early as we could we went to the Exposition. It was very fine but one half day made us tired and we went home for dinner. . . . Wednesday . . . we went early and boarded a street car bound for the State Fair grounds. There we saw very much that was interesting. . . . Thursday . . . we rode to the Park on the lake shore. We watched the lake . . . and saw the statues of Juneau and Ericson. . . . We rested awhile then went again to the Exposition." On Friday they went to Waukesha and spent their time looking at the springs and the town. At the Arcadian bottling works Sarah Jane purchased a mug with a picture on it. The next day, Saturday, they arrived at Troy Lakes where "we all walked over to our old place. . . . It was much dilapidated and we could hardly recognize it. From there we walked out by the old Mill by the lake then around by Lake View a very pleasant place then through the woods home." That night they stayed with old neighbors, the Chris Chapins; the next night they spent at Troy Center; and on Monday morning they started for home. "Every one well and everything all right while we were gone," was Sarah Jane's final comment.<sup>16</sup>

Another pleasure trip was taken in October, 1891.

Tuesday morning at quarter past five oclock we started for the Hale depot. . . . We were four, Merrill and I and Elsie and Ann. . . . We arrived in Sioux City when it was growing dark. On leaving the depot and getting on to Pierce Street we found it brilliantly lighted with colored lights and electric lights and as we neared the Corn Palace it was a blaze of beauty. . . . Wednes-

<sup>15</sup> Diary, Mar. 1, 8, 22, Apr. 30, 1885.

<sup>16</sup> Diary, Sept. 16, 30, 1888.



day morning we went out to look at the city. At noon we got a good warm dinner then went into the Corn Palace. The day was so cold. . . . We were quite uncomfortable but the beautiful sights which met our eyes nearly drove away the discomfort. We looked until sunset and listened to the famous Mexican band. Then the others left the building but I stayed to look and listen again. Also listened to the wonderful Jubilee Singers. I went over the building several times until I was too tired to look longer. I went to a place where I bought some stones from the Black Hills and another place where I bought a glass cup with "Corn Palace 1891" engraved on it. Reluctantly leaving I went to our room. Thursday morning we all took a ride on the cable cars to the northern part of the city and back. . . . We left Sioux City at five oclock . . . and when we got to Hale the sun was well up. . . . It seemed very good to get home and rest. Saturday I felt as if I could work again.<sup>17</sup>

A year later Merrill and Ellen's husband, Charles Bruntlett, went to "the Columbus Dedication at the Chicago Exposition," but apparently none of the rest of the family went at that time. The next summer and fall, however, the Kimballs and their in-laws turned to Chicago in force. In the middle of June, Merrill, Fred, Ellen, and Elsie went. Then in September another delegation set out from Hale for the Exposition. "We were eleven of us in all," wrote Sarah Jane, "Father mother and I from our place then Charly Bruntlett and Gene then John Conmey and Ann and Roy then our visitors cousin Merrill and Mary and Mrs. Thomas." Sarah Jane filled numerous pages in her diary telling about the trip. First to be visited at the Exposition was quite naturally the Iowa Building; next came the French Court, the Costa Rica Building, the Guatemala Building, the lagoon, and the California Building, and the first day was over. The second day started with a ride on the Ferris wheel; then came visits to the Turkish and India Buildings and lunch at the Maryland Building, followed by a tour of the Ceylon Building and a walk along the lake front. On the third day, the Midway, two glass works, the Moorish Palace, Wooded Island, Government Building, Manufactures Building, and the Electricity Building were on the itinerary. The next seven days followed pretty much the same pattern: most of each waking hour was spent gazing at the marvels of the nineteenth century. A parade of names moves across the pages of the diary — Fisheries Building, Peristyle, Krupp gun, Agricultural Building, Chinese Building,

<sup>17</sup> Diary, Oct. 18, 1891.

Women's Building, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, Horticultural Building, Crystal Cave, Transportation Building, Shoe and Leather Building, Ruins of Yucatan, Anthropological Building, Indian Camp, Dairy Building, Machinery Building, Lincoln Park, and State Street. On the sixth day Ann and her mother were nearly sick with colds, so they and John and Roy returned to Wyoming; the next day Mr. Kimball and Gene left for home, but Sarah Jane and her brother-in-law stayed in Chicago the entire ten days. When they arrived back at the farm, Merrill went to the Exposition again. Then when he returned, Sarah Jane, along with Ann, Fred, and Ellen, went a second time. Ann and Fred remained away from home only five days, but Sarah Jane and Ellen were gone a week. "While there," says Sarah Jane, speaking of her second trip, "I saw much I had not seen before. . . . I enjoyed every minute of it and got very tired."<sup>18</sup>

In October, 1899, Merrill went to Chicago again "to attend the week's festival." Sarah Jane gives us no details concerning this trip, saying merely: "Friday morning Merrill came home. He had had a very pleasant time in Chicago." Four years later Merrill spent another week in Chicago. The next year, 1904, he went to the World's Fair at St. Louis, but since Sarah Jane did not go we have no details of this trip either. In one entry of her diary she indicated: "We have got along nicely since he has been gone." Later she noted: "Received a card from Merrill saying he would not be at home as soon as expected on account of the slowness of the boat." When he did arrive "at nearly ten oclock" one evening he "was pretty well tired out and glad to get home."<sup>19</sup>

Several other trips are noted in the diary. One of these, treated in detail in a separate notebook, was taken to Chicago in 1878 by Sarah Jane and Merrill. The next year Merrill spent a week in St. Louis; in 1880 Ellen's mother-in-law went to visit her old home in England; and in the fall of 1889 Merrill took a trip to Pike's Peak. These last three trips receive only mention from Sarah Jane since she did not go on them.<sup>20</sup>

Although visits to Chicago, St. Louis, and Des Moines were major highlights in the life of the Kimball family, providing delightful experiences and never-to-be-forgotten memories, there were other breaks in the daily farm

<sup>18</sup> Diary, Oct. 16, 23, 30, 1892; June 18, July 2, Sept. 19-29, Oct. 22, Nov. 5, 1893.

<sup>19</sup> Diary, Oct. 8, 15, 1899; Sept. 27, Oct. 11, 1903; Sept. 4, 11, 18, 1904.

<sup>20</sup> Diary, Sept. 30, Oct. 7, 1878; Oct. 8, 1880; Sept. 15, Oct. 6, 1889. Separate Notebook.

routine. Special days, such as the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Decoration Day, and Christmas, added zest, color, and meaning to life, besides furnishing occasions for enjoyable social functions. The Fourth of July, especially, or Independence Day, as Sarah Jane referred to it, was a big day for the Kimballs. In the early years they always went to a celebration at Olin, Oxford, or Wyoming, and Sarah Jane filled a page or two of her diary with a record of the day's events. "The thermometer stood at 98° in the shade nearly all day," she wrote in 1877.

A celebration at Wyoming today. We all went but mother. . . . Several teams went along with us. When we got there we all went to Wherry's grove a half mile north of town where was a good speaker's stand with accommodations and many seats placed convenient to hear the speaker. Prof. C. L. Sheppard read the declaration of Independence and Mr Foster of Davenport delivered the Oration. Many listened with attention. After . . . dinner . . . went to witness the sham Indian Battle conducted by Buckskin Joe. It was interesting to many. After that we came down town and went to the Bowery to watch them dance. . . . After that we came home and were very tired and hot. . . . I got some supper then fed the calves then milked two cows. . . . Charlie and Ann were going to the fireworks and I got ready and went with them. We got there just in time. The torchlight procession was just moving down the street. We followed and witnessed the fireworks which were very nice. There was a big crowd in Wyoming all day. After the fireworks we went to one of the Boweries. . . . We stayed only a little while then started home . . . got home at eleven.<sup>21</sup>

Sarah Jane mentioned Thanksgiving Day several times, but usually the only observance of the day was to go to Ann's with Charley's folks and perhaps the Aldens for supper. One year she noted that "they had a nice supper but as I never eat any supper I brought some of the good cakes home to eat." Many years Sarah Jane went "to Wyoming to meet the crowd and enjoy the exercises of Decoration day." In 1884, she went "with John Conneys folks."

Main street was crowded with people. We marched to the graveyard but stopped on the way under the old oak where Dr. Calkins made a brief speech. At the cemetery the boys in blue marched around each soldier's grave and Dr. C. gave a short history of

<sup>21</sup> Diary, July 4, 1874, and each succeeding year.



each. We then went to a grove to listen to a speech from Haggen. Thought him a good orator but most of his talk unappropriate for the occasion. After him came Wolf but he was not interesting. Left the grove at 5 oclock. . . . Came home tired but had to hurry to get the milking done.<sup>22</sup>

Since there were no children in the Kimball home until Esther came, Christmas was not always observed there to the extent it was in some farm homes, but a year seldom passed that Sarah Jane did not mention the holiday. Her 1873 entry was one of the most extensive.

Last evening Merrill and I went to town with the horses and buggy. The road was very muddy. We went to the Presbyterian Church to see the Christmas tree. We found the church crowded with people old and young and a beautiful tree loaded with gifts stood near the pulpit. It was lighted with numerous tapers and produced a fine effect. Very many were made happy receiving articles from the tree. . . . We enjoyed it well. When all was over we went to Mrs. Norton's to get our team then rode down to the M. E. Church. There was a tree there. We stopped to see it and to get Marshall who was there. The tree was pretty but the room was not fixed up as pretty as the one at the Presbyterian church. It was dark when we came home.

Some years there was entertainment at the schoolhouse on Christmas eve. One of the pleasures of the season was to go to town to see the holiday merchandise in the stores and to purchase gifts. In 1889, for example, Sarah Jane writes: "We went into many of the stores. I bought a nickel clock at Babcocks and a booklet to send to Jennie Meade. At Harringtons' I bought 'Looking Backward' and sent it to Murray. At Loomis' a pair of black mittens for mother and two balls of chenille cord. At Shammels a half pound of candy. At Hodgemans a piece of looking glass. Then I was ready to go home." Frequently the Conneys and the Bruntletts came for dinner and to bring "some little presents for each of us"; other years the Kimballs went to Ellen's or Ann's for dinner. In 1891, Sarah Jane remarked that "Ellen had done credit to herself but I care very little for any feasting." Ten years later, Mr. Kimball gave each of his children a check for one hundred dollars, by far the largest gift noted in the diary. At that time he was eighty-nine years old and he still had seven years to live. After Esther came to live at the Kimballs', Christmas took on a new excitement, and

<sup>22</sup> Diary, Nov. 29, 1877; May 30, 1884; Nov. 29, 1891; May 31, 1896; Dec. 3, 1899; Dec. 2, 1900; June 2, 1901; Nov. 29, 1903.



Sarah Jane noted after Esther's first Christmas there: "In the morning Esther was greatly surprised by the presents Santa Claus brought. Many presents were exchanged among the older ones." In 1907 something of a damper was thrown on the holiday because "none of the second generation here. The first time that there were none of them. They were scattered all over the west." The next two Christmases were saddened, also; the first by the recent death of Mr. Kimball, the second by the untimely death of Ellen the preceding summer. In 1911, the final Christmas covered by the diary, conditions were more normal: all of the family was home except Murray, and Sarah Jane commented: "Christmas day and ideal in every respect."<sup>23</sup>

Hardly social events in the enjoyment sense of the term, yet events which interrupted the normal routine all too frequently and got people together were funerals. Sarah Jane mentions more than three dozen of these gatherings, the first one coming in 1875. At that time she wrote: "Mr Henry died and his funeral was today at the house. Many friends were there and all could not get in. The wife and children mourned bitterly. A large procession followed his remains to the grave. We came home from there." This funeral was typical of most of the rural ones in that the services were held in the home; in town it was common to have services first in the home and later in the church before proceeding to the cemetery. Usually the body of a deceased person was prepared for burial by a friend of the family concerned, and Mrs. Kimball performed this rite many times. When a Mrs. Van died, for example, "Mrs. Shaffer and mother performed the last acts for her and she was laid on a lounge in the parlor where her own hands had arranged the beautiful things in there. . . . Mr Pelky Mrs Shaffer and I stayed to watch with the dead. Such a long night as it was." When Clarence Leamon died, John "and Merrill laid him out." Once in 1878 the Kimballs had the unpleasant task of attending two funerals in a single day, the first in Wyoming, and the second in Olin. In warm weather the deceased was usually interred first and the funeral sermon was preached afterward. Most interments mentioned by Sarah Jane were in the cemeteries of Wyoming, Hale, or Olin, but a few of them were in private cemeteries on farms. For example, one lady "was buried beside her husband in their field. Many teams followed her there." Frequently, Sarah Jane felt constrained to impart to her diary some evidence of her belief in immortality; for example: "We pity the family but as for him he has gained a higher life and has fin-

<sup>23</sup> Diary, Dec. 25, 1873 and each succeeding year.

ished his earthly work." Death first struck the Kimball home in December, 1896, when Sarah Jane's mother died at the age of eighty-two after an illness of seven weeks. After her death, which occurred on a Friday, she was prepared for burial by her daughters and a neighbor lady. Then her body was carried into the parlor. That night a neighbor couple sat up with the body. The next day the house was put "in order," and the undertaker came in the evening with the casket. On Sunday he placed the body in the casket, and Sarah Jane cut and arranged flowers to put around her mother. Although the funeral was scheduled for one o'clock, people began to gather at the house before ten. After the services and interment were over, Sarah Jane said simply: "I hope she feels happy as she thought." Twelve years later, in October, 1908, Sarah Jane's father died at the age of ninety-six. Once again the house was filled with neighbors who brought consolation and helped with the work. The services were held in the house and then a long procession of carriages followed the hearse to the cemetery in Wyoming. A few days later Marshall's wife was buried, and in June, 1909, Ellen died. Thus, death, which left the Kimball family untouched for many years, struck three blows within less than a year's time.<sup>24</sup>

Just as it is easy to exaggerate the dreary and harsh aspects of ante-World-War I farm life, so it is easy to lean over the other way and romanticize it. Visits, trips, circuses, fairs, and expositions did enrich the lives of countless farm families, but these pleasures were the exceptions and not the rule. Day in and day out the Kimballs went through a routine of early rising, work, time out for meals, some relaxations in the evening, and early retiring. Sarah Jane frequently gives us an account of evening activities when the family was gathered together in the sitting room of the home. In the 1870's she told of the boys "playing with cards in the evening," but she did not divulge the type of card game played. Also popular at that time was the game of dominoes. Thus, on a winter evening in 1875, Sarah Jane noted in her diary: "The boys and father and Ellen playing dominoes, mother reading and I sewing by the stand." A few weeks later she men-

<sup>24</sup> Diary, Aug. 15, 1875; Oct. 14, 1877; Aug. 11, Sept. 8, 9, 22, 1878; Oct. 12, 1879; Mar. 25, Sept. 3, 1882; Mar. 16, Oct. 5, 1884; Jan. 11, Sept. 20, 1885; June 13, Aug. 1, Sept. 5, 1886; Feb. 19, 1888; July 21, 1889; June 1, 22, 1890; Nov. 8, 1891; Feb. 18, June 10, 1894; Sept. 8, 1895; Mar. 22, Aug. 15, 1897; Oct. 29, 1899; Jan. 14, Apr. 1, July 29, 1900; Nov. 24, 1901; Mar. 9, 1902; May 24, 1903; Oct. 2, 16, 1904; Aug. 13, 1905; Aug. 26, Sept. 30, 1906; Nov. 1, 1908; June 27, 1909; Jan. 1, Apr. 9, 1911.

tioned popping corn in the evening. After 1880, when only Sarah Jane and Merrill were left at home with their parents, it became less common to play games in the evening; then reading, sewing, and listening to music became established evening pastimes.<sup>25</sup>

Sarah Jane, Merrill, and Mr. Kimball were all avid readers, and many references to books and papers are found in the diary. Reading is usually thought of as a diversion enjoyed individually, but in the Kimball home reading out loud for the education and pleasure of the whole family was a regular feature, especially on winter evenings and on Sundays. Early in 1874, Hiram Niles "brought some 'Danbury Newses' and Merrill read aloud some pieces. Some that had much fun in them." Later in the year mention is made of his reading a story in the *New York Ledger*, a weekly paper popular at the time. In February, 1875, Sarah Jane wrote: "In the evening Homer and I took turns in reading 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' Jennie sat and sewed." A few weeks later the family was "much interested" in the Beecher-Tilton trial, and Mr. Kimball read aloud about it in the *New York Daily Graphic*. Early in 1876, "The Polar and Tropical Worlds" held the family's attention. In the fall of 1877, "Merrill read two stories in his paper the 'Saturday Journal.' Father sat on the end of the lounge and Rob [a hired man] laid down on it. . . . Mother and I each sat in the rocking chairs." One evening in the spring of 1878, Sarah Jane "worked at my shells and Merrill read the story by Jules Verne 'Secrets of the Island.' It is very interesting." Later that year, while on a trip to town, Sarah Jane purchased Darwin's *Origin of Species*. On many such trips she either bought books in Wyoming or ordered them by mail from Brentanos or Wanamakers. Once, upon receiving some books, she reported: "A big package. I had eleven. John's folks came to look them over and get theirs. I have looked over mine today and read some. I am pleased with them." In 1882, Longfellow's *Miles Standish* was read. Several months later, Sarah Jane wrote: "Merrill reads books or papers every evening until 9 oclock. We are all interested to hear him." In 1888, Thomas Stevens' account of his journey around the world on a bicycle held much fascination for all the family. In a heavier vein was one of President Harrison's letters in a newspaper. On the list of reading in early 1890 were *Ramona* and the *Life and Journals of Louisa M. Alcott*. Sometimes it was too cold for comfort in the sitting room, but that did not prevent reading. Thus, in 1896, "we sat

<sup>25</sup> Diary, Dec. 28, 29, 1874; Jan. 8, Feb. 12, 1875.



around the kitchen fire. Merrill sat by the stand in the sitting room near the door and read aloud to us." The books singled out for mention around the turn of the century were *Romance of Two Worlds*, Marie Corelli's *Wormwood* and *Temporal Power*, *St. Elmo*, and *Shams* by Ben Morgan. The titles in the diary give some indication of the reading tastes in the Kimball house, but much reading matter failed to receive notice from Sarah Jane. When the old home was turned over to new occupants in 1926, there were dozens of books in it, plus old copies of the *Wyoming Journal*, *Godey's Ladies' Book*, the *Delineator*, *Harper's Weekly*, the *Truthseeker*, a spiritualist publication, and numerous other journals. Indeed, the printed page held an allure in the homes of countless nineteenth century farm families which it seems to have lost all too generally today.<sup>26</sup>

If reading was the greatest diversion in the Kimball home, music was certainly the second diversion; in fact, for Merrill it might have been the reverse. In his youth Merrill enjoyed considerable reputation as a fiddler at dances, but after the death of his fiancée at the age of twenty-six he rarely played his violin; he continued to derive great pleasure from music however. During the first year fully covered in the diary, 1874, music is mentioned several times. Early in the year Merrill played at a dance for the last time so far as we know; then one evening in June, "John Ann Fred and Grant came to hear Hily play on the fiddle. We all like to listen to him so well. Ellen played second for him part of the time." Finally, that winter Sarah Jane notes on two occasions that Marshall worked on his Aeolian harp.<sup>27</sup>

Much of the music was provided by phonographs, but in the earlier years especially, Ellen, Merrill, and others played on instruments in the home. In 1875 a Mr. Whitney of Monticello came to the farm to sell Marshall an organ. "Miss Carrie Dunham came with him and played on the organ," wrote Sarah Jane. "She can play nicely." But Marshall did not like the organ, so four days later, "Mr. Whitney came again and was here to dinner. Marshall bought the organ he brought this time." A decade later John and Ann purchased an organ, and the Kimballs "went over to hear the music. En-

<sup>26</sup> Diary, Mar. 12, Sept. 4, 1874; Feb. 3, 20, Mar. 27, 1875; Jan. 1, Feb. 10, 1876; Mar. 10, Sept. 2, 1877; Mar. 25, Nov. 14, 1878; Feb. 26, Sept. 10, Oct. 20, 1882; Feb. 18, 1883; Apr. 15, June 10, Oct. 14, 1888; Feb. 3, 24, 1889; Feb. 9, 1890; Oct. 23, 1892; Feb. 18, 1894; Nov. 1, 1896; Jan. 23, Feb. 20, 27, 1898; Jan. 28, 1900; Dec. 15, 1901; Jan. 18, 1903.

<sup>27</sup> Diary, Feb. 24, June 26, Nov. 17, 1874; Apr. 1, 1875.



joyed it but not as well as we had anticipated." In 1879, when Merrill returned from a week's visit in St. Louis he "brought home a musical instrument called an OrguINETTE. Several have been in to see it today." Four months later when company was at the house: "Mother played on the OrguINETTE for them." One evening in 1892 a Mr. Grabbe came to visit and brought his accordion. "We had much music," commented Sarah Jane. But the most characteristic instrument of the 1870's and the 1880's perhaps was the melodeon, and the Kimballs prized theirs highly. Quite typical was the following evening in 1877: "The lamp was lighted and Ellen played on the melodeon. . . . We found room to sit down around it. Ellen played several pieces and Mr House sang with her. Afterward Merrill played some on his fiddle and Rob. danced. . . . We sat up till nearly 10 oclock." Sometimes one of the ladies visiting at the Kimballs' would play the melodeon, also; for example: "After dinner we went upstairs and Viola played for us on the melodeon," Sarah Jane wrote in speaking of a Mrs. Haskins in 1886. And, as might be expected, the Kimballs were entertained musically in some of the homes of their friends. At the Levsen home one afternoon in 1893: "We had a good visit," noted Sarah Jane. "Mrs. L. played on her piano and sang for us then showed us her albums." After Esther was old enough to take music lessons, Sarah Jane engaged a Miss Florence Spencer as Esther's music teacher, thus carrying on the musical tradition in the Kimball household. A few months after Esther began her study, Sarah Jane and Merrill purchased a new Piano Organ for her. When it arrived:

We made room for it and he brought it in. It is a beauty and grand looking. The tone is fine as can be. Velma C. came in soon with Esther. She tried [it] and was delighted. We told Ann and Ellen over the telephone and they came. Soon as school was out Edin and Frieda Cahoon came in. . . . So we had quite a party. Velma played and Edin played and sang. It was all fine. At half past 5 oclock they had all gone.<sup>23</sup>

One of Merrill's hobbies after Edison's phonograph came on the market was to purchase and listen to the latest type of talking machine and to accumulate a large collection of records. An instrument popular in the 1890's was the Symphonium, and Merrill owned several of them. Sarah Jane first mentions one in 1892, noting that it came by express and that it was "a large one in an oak case and makes beautiful music." In the evening it was

<sup>23</sup> Diary, July 12, 16, 1875; May 16, 1877; Oct. 14, 1879; Feb. 15, 1880; Oct. 17, 1886; Oct. 9, 1892; Dec. 24, 1893; Apr. 23, May 21, 1905; Aug. 19, Sept. 2, 1906.

common to have the Conneys and the Bruntletts or some friends over to listen to the music. At times a rather sizeable group assembled, as on one Thursday evening when "some of the river folks came to hear the music. Mrs. Giddings and daughter Pearl and two Smith girls and two from Hale and Horace and Alice Leamon and two children 'Tump' and Eva twelve in all. They seemed to enjoy it." Sarah Jane does not list the titles of any of the records, but a girl, Jessie Clark, who lived at the home in 1899, tells the names of some of the selections played one evening in March of that year. "Mr. M. Kimball played seven tunes," she wrote. "Their names were King Cotton, A love letter Polka, Carnival of Venice, Yale two-step, Listen to the Mocking Birds, Bride Elect, and Say Au revoir but not Good bye." Later in the month, she reported again: "The folks came over to hear the music. We played Virginia Reel, the Mocking Bird, Old Black Joe. I sang with it." Shortly before the evenings mentioned by Jessie, Merrill purchased a "new music box called the Olympia. He started it going and it is grand. He fixed a place for it in the corner where the Symphonium stands." Two years later, "Merrill has bought a new symphonium music box and set it going last Sunday night but none of them noticed but what it was the Olympia." From this time until the diary ends many new machines and records were brought into the home to provide pleasure for the Kimballs and their friends. Some of the old machines were kept and others "will go for part payment on the new one." Prices of the machines are not given by Sarah Jane, but she does mention in 1908 that Merrill bought a new fibre talking machine horn for eight dollars after trading "off his old one for \$4.50." Early in 1909 the well-known name of Victor appears for the first time, although Merrill may have owned a machine of this make for some time. Later that year, "Mr. Freeman came and brought a new talking machine for Merrill. It is the Victor Victrola all in a box 2 x 1½. It is fine. Merrill let his go towards it for 47 dollars. Evening he ran it some."<sup>29</sup>

In December, 1901, came an innovation to the home which greatly enlarged the audience for Merrill's music and changed in many ways the Kimball habits and customs. Sarah Jane tells the story:

After dinner they put in a telephone for us. They have been working for some time past putting in phones where people wanted

<sup>29</sup> Diary, July 24, Dec. 4, 1892; Sept. 16, 1893; Jan. 8, 15, 22, 1899; Dec. 30, 1900; Oct. 13, Nov. 10, Dec. 1, 8, 22, 1901; Jan. 25, Feb. 8, Mar. 8, 1903; Apr. 23, Sept. 3, 24, 1905; Feb. 9, 16, 1908; Feb. 28, Sept. 19, 1909; Jessie Clark Diary, March 5, 26, 1899.

them commencing at Hale village and reached us Tuesday afternoon. It seems odd to us to hear the bell jingling in our house and know that we can now talk to all our neighbors. The commencement of it on Christmas eve. . . . We heard through the phone that Elsie was at home.

Not only did the Kimballs talk to their neighbors, but they also used the telephone for a purpose which may seem strange today; namely, to broadcast the music from their phonographs a la radio style. In the words of Sarah Jane: "The talking machine was running most of the time and the telephone receiver was left down so the neighbors could hear the music." This service was rendered to the other people on the line many times, and if there were complaints Sarah Jane was silent about them.<sup>30</sup>

Much of the foregoing discussion would seem to indicate that the Kimballs were essentially secularly minded and that they felt no need for either the spiritual inspiration or the social fellowship offered by the church. Such a conclusion is incorrect: indeed, during their early years in Iowa, the members of the family went to church regularly, and even after 1873 they attended special services occasionally. During the 1860's, however, they became interested in spiritualism, the belief that spirits do mingle and converse with mortals, and they felt that this doctrine offered the most satisfactory proof of the continuity of life. Thus, throughout the period under discussion, Sarah Jane, as well as other members of the family, found in spiritualism the source of a large measure of their inspiration, consolation, hope, and companionship.

One of the first references to spiritualism in the diary comes in the summer of 1875. At that time Sarah Jane wrote: "Tonight Mary Ellen and Steve Newell came and we all sat around the table to see it tip, but it didn't tip. Marshall had lots of fun over it. We sat up quite late." A much more successful affair was held in February, 1877, and Sarah Jane described it.

Afternoon I went to invite the Vans to our house this evening. Merrill went to invite Murray, father went to invite Bruntlets. We had a spiritualist meeting here. Several persons came in and among the rest was Dutch Hank and the Medium Dr. Dobson. We let him go in the parlor where he was sewed to the chair and the chair to the carpet. The windows were darkened. A small black curtain was hung at the top of the door and mother's dark shawl was hung so as to fill up the rest of the space. When all was

<sup>30</sup> Diary, Dec. 29, 1901; Feb. 2, 9, 16, Mar. 9, 1902; Jan. 24, 1904.



in readiness we formed a circle in the sitting room facing the parlor door. I was in the circle. We saw numerous hands and among the rest were Aunt Mary's, Mary Conmey's, and Mrs. Horton's or what appeared like them. We heard voices and saw a goblet of water taken from Marshall's hand and carried to the top of the door then set down at the bottom. I touched a spirit hand through the aperture. We broke the circle at about 9 o'clock.<sup>31</sup>

Many such circles were held in the Kimball home and in the homes of some of their neighbors. At one in March, 1877, Sarah Jane was told that "something would happen" to her "in three years that would be very different from the life I was leading now, that I was going away from here and things would change for the better, that for the most part I would be happier but would have some trouble. I'll see how much of this will be true. It is fun to hear him talk." Of course, the prediction did not come true, but Sarah Jane's faith was not shaken. Even when she and her mother were "nearly sick" with hard colds they "worked hard nearly all day getting things righted" in preparation for a seance conducted by Mate Barker at which ten people from Olin were present in addition to the Kimballs themselves. "After it was all over we had supper at near twelve o'clock," Sarah Jane reported. "They stayed some after and went away about half past one o'clock. I was very sleepy and tired." Dr. Dobson came to the Kimball home many times, and he was a great favorite with the family. At one of his seances, "Jesse Shook played on his Harmonica for the music. We saw hands and faces as usual and hands kept time with Jesse's music also a handkerchief was made to keep time. After it was over with there was much talk about it and some speculation as to the probability of Dobson doing it or not." Usually there was slate writing as part of the performance; once a message came to Sarah Jane "saying 'Niece put your left hand under the table, don't grab.'"

I did and felt a light warm touch. It bade me do so again and I did and felt it plainer than before on my arm hand and knee. The name signed was Aunt Mary. . . . Once three hard raps were heard like someone kicking the table underneath and once Dobson was thrown out of his chair. We sat one hour and a half and it was lively and interesting all through.

That night Sarah Jane noted that Dobson was too nervous to sleep. On another occasion, when her Aunt Eliza and Aunt Lavina were visiting at the

<sup>31</sup> Diary, July 9, Aug. 1, 1875; Feb. 10, 11, 1877.



home, Sarah Jane remarked that "the 'aunties' thought it a trick of Dobson's."<sup>32</sup>

After Dobson's death, other mediums came to the neighborhood. A certain Mrs. Cade was one of these. In 1892 she conducted seances at the Conmey and Kimball homes and gave advice regarding Sarah Jane's niece who was ill. At a circle in 1896, Mr. Potter, the canning factory man from Wyoming, "thought he was controlled by an Indian. We laughed to see him perform." During the final illness of Mrs. Kimball, B. L. Eskelsen, a medium from Clinton, Iowa, was consulted after the family doctor had given up hope of saving Mrs. Kimball's life. "Half Moon told us that she could not get well," wrote Sarah Jane. "That spirits were with her waiting and it would not be long before she would join them." When she did die, Mr. Eskelsen was called again and he conducted the funeral service. Twelve years later, Mrs. Alice C. Barry, "an inspirational spiritualist speaker" of Comanche, delivered the funeral address for Mr. Kimball. Sarah Jane's own services were conducted by Reverend Bessie Bellman of Cedar Rapids.<sup>33</sup>

Beginning in 1882 and continuing through 1897 with only two interruptions, in 1888 and 1892, some of the Kimballs attended the spiritualist camp meeting each August. The meeting of 1882 was held at Tama, but thereafter it was at Clinton. Sarah Jane and Merrill first went to the meeting in 1883. Sarah Jane's account of the trip follows:

We stopped at the Eaton House then walked to the spiritualist Camp Meeting grounds. It is in a pleasant grove on the bluffs back some distance from the river and called Mt. Pleasant. We went in at the gate and found ourselves in an enclosed space of a few acres surrounded by a barbed wire fence. A speakers stand is half way down a sloping hill while all above it were arranged seats in a circular form extending nearly to the top of the hill. Tents were in every direction and some rough wooden buildings. A large Hall was on one side. We sat down and listened to one good lecture then soon after went to our dinner. I was very tired and hungry. After that I walked all over the grounds. After noon we listened to a good lecture by Moses Hull. After that I walked around and visited some. At sunset I sat in Sunderlin's tent while

<sup>32</sup> Diary, Mar. 18, 25, Aug. 12, 1877; Jan. 3, 15, 1878; Mar. 14, June 6, Aug. 14-16, Oct. 17, 18, 1879; Apr. 22, Aug. 29, Sept. 3, Oct. 14, 1880; Mar. 22, 1885.

<sup>33</sup> Diary, Feb. 7, Sept. 4, 11, 18, 25, 1892; Nov. 26, 1893; Sept. 13, Dec. 2, 1896; Aug. 15, Sept. 12, 1897; Nov. 1, 1908.

Merrill went to a seance room. Evening an entertainment at the Hall which was interesting. After that Merrill and I went to Sunderlin's tent then started for the Eaton House.<sup>34</sup>

In 1884, Sarah Jane and her mother went to the meeting and stayed at the Eaton House. The first evening they "went to Dr. Shea's seance room. He was too tired and the company too small so he had to give it up." The next morning, refreshed by a good sleep, they returned to the grounds, paid ten cents apiece admission, and went in. The morning was spent largely in listening to speeches, and at noon they "went to Secretary D. Skinner's tent to get a certificate for reduced rates to return home," a ritual performed each year. In the afternoon Sarah Jane met a man named Kent who "could talk well. He could read character like a book." Later she and her mother attended a lecture on Myths and Mythology by a J. H. Randall, which Sarah Jane found very interesting. After supper in the dining hall they went again to Dr. Shea's seance room. "There were eleven of us there," said Sarah Jane, "and the Dr. felt good so we had a good seance. Saw spirits in the cabinet very plain. Saw Mary Farley combing her hair. Saw Charlie Kimball. Saw Aunt Mary and she opened the cabinet door wide and stood there: that was the last. We left the room well satisfied." That night Sarah Jane was awakened by a bright light shining in her window; it proved to be "the electric light from the steamboats on the river." The next morning the ladies settled their bill at the Eaton House and spent some time at the greenhouse, where Sarah Jane "bought a dollars worth of plants." In the afternoon they returned to the camp ground to listen to a lecture by Mrs. H. L. Lake before entraining for home.<sup>35</sup>

Succeeding trips to Clinton followed pretty much the pattern of those made in 1883 and 1884. Sometimes, as in 1885, Mr. and Mrs. Kimball went first and after their return Sarah Jane and Merrill would go; usually John and Ann Conmey went, also. At the meeting of 1885 a Professor W. F. Peck lectured on "Our Happiness," stressing the point that happiness "consists in the perfect harmony of our nature with its environment." Later at the same meeting Sarah Jane went to a seance circle conducted by Henry B. Allen and attended by seventeen persons in all. "We had a pleasant experience," recalled Sarah Jane. "Heard very fine music on the dulcimer and guitar. And other manifestations of spirit presence. We each got

<sup>34</sup> Diary, Sept. 10, 1882; Aug. 26, 1883.

<sup>35</sup> Diary, Aug. 17, 1884.

a message but as we were near the last end of the circle we had not time to hear much." In 1889, the Kimballs, parents and Sarah Jane and Ann, went directly to the camp ground and secured rooms at the Bazaar rather than getting lodging at the Eaton House. Perhaps they regretted this action because Ann and Sarah Jane "had our bed in a room with three others. The pillows were stuffed with Excelsior and as hard as boards. We could not sleep on them. Next day we got some better ones." The next evening they attended a seance where a Mrs. Sawyer served as medium. "Mrs. Sawyer's control little Maudie talked very plain from the cabinet most of the time," was Sarah Jane's verdict. "After the seance Ann and I went to see the dance go on. Were very well pleased to watch them. Nine sets on the floor all of the time." In 1890, Mr. and Mrs. Kimball and John and Ann Conmey went to Clinton together. During their absence from home, Sarah Jane suffered some "with difficult breathing and palpitation of the heart"; as a result the folks left Clinton sooner than they had planned and they reported upon their unexpected return home that "the spirits told them that" Sarah Jane "was sick and they hurried home on that account." They brought some medicine with them which proved effective, and Sarah Jane testified: "In consequence of the medicine I have been gaining strength all the week and feel quite like myself today."<sup>36</sup>

The meeting of 1891, attended first by Mr. Kimball and John Conmey and later by Mrs. Kimball, Ann, and Sarah Jane, was in some respects a disappointment. After leaving "our budgets" at Mallmans' the ladies proceeded to the camp grounds. "Looked around but did not find many mediums. Went to Mrs. Evers and got fooled. . . . Evening went to Mrs. Fritz seance. It was worse than nothing. So much confusion. Too many in and too much heat. Nothing seen that could be identified. Another dollar apiece thrown away," complained Sarah Jane. The next morning they went down town and visited the greenhouse, where they "enjoyed greatly looking at the beautiful flowers." In the afternoon they returned to the camp: it was "Indian's day. We did not like the proceedings. Evening went to a seance at Mrs. Thompson's. What there was seemed satisfactory but it was so little." Fortunately for the ladies the meeting was not an entire disappointment, because they found the lectures by Professor Lockwood, Mrs. Lillie, and Mrs. Luther extremely stimulating.

<sup>36</sup> Diary, Aug. 24, 30, 1885; Aug. 15, 1886; Aug. 14, Sept. 4, 1887; Aug. 25, 1889; Aug. 24, 1890.



The grove was well lighted by gasoline lamps and with the leafy canopy overhead and the rustic rostrum with the beautiful music and those two noble women and that man's scientific mind with Pres. Loveland as guiding star it was a fit place for angels to stop and listen. And breathless were the thousands of people who listened to the close. The place was like enchantment.<sup>37</sup>

Apparently none of the Kimballs went to the meeting in 1892, but in 1893 Mr. and Mrs. Kimball, Ann, and Sarah Jane went again and attended the usual lectures and seances. Ann was the family's sole representative in 1894, but in 1895 and in 1896 Sarah Jane and her parents were again in attendance. After the 1896 meeting Sarah Jane wrote: "Father and mother stood it well." Two months later, however, Mrs. Kimball suffered the paralytic stroke which was to prove fatal. The next year Sarah Jane and her father spent a week at Clinton, the last time either of them was there. Not until 1909 does mention of the camp meeting appear again in the diary; then Sarah Jane noted: "Ann and John went to the spiritualist campmeeting." In 1910 they went again, accompanied by Marshall, and they "had a good time. Friday Marshall told us about it and showed us some messages." Marshall continued to go to Clinton regularly each summer until at least the middle 1920's, when Sarah Jane and Merrill died.<sup>38</sup>

The great majority of people undoubtedly will find the Kimball devotion to spiritualism difficult to understand; to them belief in the doctrine itself and faith in mediums will seem naive and a bit incredible. Yet for the Kimballs spiritualism was a vital force. It was their answer to the eternal question of immortality, and as such it filled their lives with dignity, meaning, and promise. As a result, their actions and attitudes reflected a strong and abiding faith in what might be termed the order and rightness of the universe. For them there were no fundamental fears and doubts about the ultimate facts of life and nature. Perhaps it was this spiritual assurance, together with her appreciation of beauty in all forms, which is responsible for surrounding Sarah Jane's story with a sort of "golden age" aura which her accounts of work, heat, blizzards, and illness do not dispel. Indeed, the most enduring memories left by a reading of her diary are of things of the spirit and of the mind, of books, music, flowers, birds, conversation, broad-

<sup>37</sup> Diary, Aug. 9, 23, 1891.

<sup>38</sup> Diary, Aug. 27, 1893; Aug. 26, 1894; Aug. 25, 1895; Aug. 30, 1896; Sept. 12, 1897; Aug. 8, 1909; Aug. 14, 21, 1910; Aug. 20, Sept. 3, 1911; Aug. 11, 1912.



ening horizons, rather than of work, sweat, and economics. The last three existed aplenty, but they did not seem to have a depressing and deadening effect on the Kimballs. Little of the bleakness at times associated with nineteenth century farm life touched them. In fact, considering the number of trips they took and the amount of company they entertained, it is a wonder that they got their farm work done. But get it done they did, and at the same time they succeeded in accumulating a rather sizeable monetary surplus. In so doing they and most of their neighbors were shining exceptions, if we are to believe Professor Fred Shannon's statements, in speaking of the Midwestern farmer of 1900, to the effect that "some money was made beyond the needs for a comfortable living by about one person in twelve in agricultural occupations" and that "few producers made in excess of a scant living."<sup>39</sup>

Mid-twentieth century readers of Sarah Jane's diary will undoubtedly be struck by what seem to be startling omissions; there are practically no allusions to government and none whatsoever to farm organizations. She notes the visit of the census taker in 1890 and of the assessor in 1907, 1909, and 1910, and she tells of her father and Merrill going to the schoolhouse to vote in several elections, but only in these few notations does government come under her purview. Life appeared to be largely local, and farm families looked to their own members and to their neighbors for the solution of their problems. The Kimball story, like so many others, illustrates the truth in Clifford Lord's assertion that "what emerges from the study of the people's history is a strong reaffirmation of the importance of the individual, a tenet basic to western civilization and essential to the American ideal."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Fred A. Shannon, "The Status of the Midwestern Farmer in 1900," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 37:506 (December, 1950).

<sup>40</sup> Diary, Nov. 13, 1887; June 8, 1890; Oct. 25, 1896; Nov. 7, 1897; Nov. 11, 1906; Feb. 24, 1907; Mar. 14, 1909; Feb. 20, 1910; Clifford L. Lord, "The Significance of State and Local History," *Missouri Historical Review*, 44:136 (January, 1950).

DOCUMENTS  
THE CIVIL WAR DIARY OF C. F. BOYD,  
FIFTEENTH IOWA INFANTRY  
PART II\*

*Edited by Mildred Throne*

*Camp at Battlefield of Shiloh*

*April 8th* [1862] Some of us slept in the tents of the 8th Iowa last night. The Tents of the 8th and 12th Iowa are close together and the men are missing — nearly all of them were taken prisoners on Sunday<sup>1</sup> Here are the knapsacks and blankets just as left when the fight commenced at daylight on Sunday morning and the men had only time to get their guns and fall in or rather to fall out and go to fighting. They never saw their baggage again.

The rain kept falling all night There was a great *panic* this morning caused by men firing off their guns to see if the *loads* would go out There was a rally on the color line and we expected another fight It is very chilly and thousands of the wounded lay out the *third* night with no care Burrial squads have been busy all day burrying the *dead* Our *losses* are thought to be from 15,000 to 20,000 men and the enemies much greater <sup>2</sup> Have been trying to get our Company together but cannot find all the men Granville Feagins was killed and left on the field of Sunday Oscar Ford was mortally wounded and is now dead Lieut Fisk is missing likewise

\*Part I of this diary appeared in the January, 1952, issue of the JOURNAL.

<sup>1</sup> The 8th Iowa lost 379 men captured, the 12th lost 429 captured, in the Battle of Shiloh. *The War of the Rebellion . . . Official Records . . .*, Series I, Vol. X, Part I, 101. (Hereafter listed as *Official Records*.)

<sup>2</sup> On the first day of battle, April 6, the Union forces numbered some 40,000 men; the Confederate, about 44,000. On Monday, April 7, the Union forces had been raised to about 54,000, while the Confederates had dropped to 34,000. Casualties on the Union side were: 1,754 killed, 8,408 wounded, and 2,885 missing or captured; a total of 13,047. Confederate losses were: 1,728 killed, 8,012 wounded, and 959 captured or missing; a total of 10,699. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. X, Part I, 108, 391; Joseph W. Rich, *The Battle of Shiloh* (Iowa City, 1911), 89-90. Grant questioned the accuracy of the Confederate figures, claiming that his burial parties estimated a total of 4,000 buried from both armies. *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant* (2 vols., New York, 1885), 1:367.

Crosly and some others Some fifteen men of Co "G" are wounded and some of them badly All the wounded are being hurried on hospital boats and will be sent away

Today an advanced column of our army encountered a detachment of the enemy and quite a skirmish took place This afternoon we were assigned to Laumans Brigade<sup>3</sup> and we went out a couple of miles to the South We have lost about all our blankets and knapsacks and have nothing but hard bread to eat which has no more taste or substance than a *shingle* This has been a cold and stormy day and the mud is about knee deep

*April 9th* Weather damp and rainy Went down to the Landing this forenoon to hunt up some of our baggage which we left on the boat Thousands of men were there getting their teams and camp equipments Wounded and sick men were lying around on the muddy ground and the dead were being tramped over as if they were logs of wood I helped to carry two poor fellows on a boat who had the measles and were too weak to help themselves. They had lain there two days they said The hillside at the Landing is so deep in mud as to be almost impassable

I slipped a few lines into an envelope and gave it to a stranger and asked him to *mail* it somewhere so that it would go to the folks at home and let them know that we are not as bad off as we *might* be All mails are stoped and no letters will be taken from here unless *smuggled* through This has been a *terrible* battle and the news must not go North for a few days until the Reports can be *fixed* up This afternoon I took a stroll out about three miles. I have not eat anything to-day and have been so sickened that I shall not want anything for sometime

Where the retreat commenced on Monday afternoon are hundreds and thousands of wounded rebels They had fallen in heaps and the woods had taken fire and burned all the clothing off them and the naked and blackened corpses are still lying there unburied On the hillside near a deep hollow our men were hauling them down and throwing them into the deep gulley *One hundred and eighty* had been thrown in when I was there. Men were in on top of the *dead* straightening out their legs and arms and *tramping* them down so as to make the hole contain as many as possible Other men on the hillside had ropes with a noose on one end and they would attach

<sup>3</sup> Brig.-Gen. Jacob G. Lauman commanded the Third Brigade of the Fourth Division of the Army of the Tennessee. At Shiloh this Brigade had consisted of the 31st and 44th Indiana and the 17th and 25th Kentucky. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. X, Part I, 103.

this to a mans foot or his head and haul him down to the hollow and roll him in Where the ground was level it was so full of water that the excavation filled up as fast as dug and the corpse was just rolled in and the earth just thrown over it and left

War is *hell* broke loose and benumbs all the tender feelings of men and makes of them *brutes* I do not want to see any more such scenes and yet I would not have missed this for any consideration

*April 13th Sunday* The three days between these dates has been occupied in getting into shape again and looking after the *dead* and *wounded* General Grant is blamed with this great *disaster*<sup>4</sup> All think that the troops had no discipline here Some of them had been here a week or two and not a single fortification had been made.<sup>5</sup> The pickets were surprised on the morning of the battle and consequently the whole army was *surprised* Our men should have known that the enemy had a strong force at Corinth 25 miles away. . .<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The "blame" for Shiloh was long disputed. Certainly, the men who fought there had no love for Grant, but great admiration for Buell. A member of the 2nd Iowa wrote on April 16th: "I have ridden over the whole field, in every division, and am a frequenter at Grant's headquarters, and speak the sentiments of *the army* when I say that Gen. Grant is responsible for much of the terrible sacrifice of life on the 6th." *Keokuk Weekly Gate City*, Apr. 30, 1862. W. H. Clune of the 6th Iowa concluded that "General Buell is unquestionably the hero of Pittsburgh, and from what they say of his management yesterday can go to bed and forget more generalship in one night than Gen. Grant ever knew." *Ibid.*, Apr. 23, 1862.

<sup>5</sup> "The criticism has often been made that the Union troops should have been entrenched at Shiloh. Up to that time the pick and spade had been but little resorted to at the West. I had, however, taken this subject under consideration soon after re-assuming command in the field, and . . . my only military engineer reported unfavorably. Besides this, the troops with me, officers and men, needed discipline and drill more than they did experience with the pick, shovel and axe. Reinforcements were arriving almost daily, composed of troops that had been hastily thrown together into companies and regiments—fragments of incomplete organizations, the men and officers strangers to each other. Under all these circumstances I concluded that drill and discipline were worth more to our men than fortifications." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:357-8.

<sup>6</sup> The officers in command of course knew that the Confederate troops were concentrated at Corinth—having retreated there after the defeat at Fort Donelson in February. When Grant took over the command of the Army of the Tennessee in March he planned to concentrate his forces at Pittsburg Landing and, after Buell's forces had arrived, to move against Corinth. What the officers did not seem to know, on the morning of April 6, was that the Confederate General, A. S. Johnston, had moved his forces out of Corinth toward Pittsburg in great strength on April 3. *Ibid.*, 330-36; William Preston Johnston, "Albert Sidney Johnston and the Shiloh Campaign," *Century Magazine*, 29:621 (February, 1885).



Only 35 men are able for duty<sup>7</sup> The bad water and the hard fare has given them the diarrhea Many can not stand from weakness. Am sick myself and have suffered a great deal for the last two nights

*April 14th* Almost all sick and the blues prevail in the most malignant form<sup>8</sup>

*April 15th* Moved Camp to-day about two miles farther out on the battlefield We are on the front and the enemies pickets not far away<sup>9</sup> We found a good camping place on a hill side with water and wood convenient. . . Hard times are upon us and many of the boys wish they were at home Poor fellows I pity them Some of them are suffering much and we can take but little care of them Not more than one third of the Company can take care of themselves. I am not disappointed by these hard times The war must go on until a successful end is reached no difference what the sacrifice may be. . . .

*April 17th* How we wish Dr Fisk was with us now To night there are rumors of an attack and we sleep on our Arms.

<sup>7</sup> The 15th Iowa had lost a total of 185 men in the two-day battle at Shiloh: 21 killed, 156 wounded, and 8 captured or missing. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. X, Part I, 105. Of Company G, which probably numbered around 150 at the time of the battle, 1 man was killed, 14 wounded, and 2 captured, one of whom was Lieut. Fisk. *History of the Fifteenth Regiment, Iowa Veteran Volunteer Infantry* . . . (Keokuk, 1887), 558-62, 579.

<sup>8</sup> Lieut. S. D. Thompson, 3rd Iowa, reported: "The sanitary condition of the army was anything but flattering. Of our own regiment which, so far as we could hear, was a type of all the rest, very few were even in tolerable health. Fevers and camp diarrhoea [sic] filled the hospitals to overflowing; the sick lists increased rapidly; and the great extent to which the army was weakened in numbers by sickness, became a just source of alarm. It became painfully evident, too, that its morale was being greatly impaired by the same cause. . . . It will not be surprising, then, that many good soldiers were possessed of a homesickness—a desire to be sent home on furlough or discharged, that amounted almost to a mania." S. D. Thompson, *Recollections with the Third Iowa Regiment* (Cincinnati, 1864), 258.

<sup>9</sup> General P. G. T. Beauregard withdrew his Confederate forces to Corinth, some twenty miles southwest of Shiloh, following the Union victory on April 7. The Union forces, now under the personal command of Major-General Henry W. Halleck, with Grant second in command, inched slowly toward Corinth during April and May, in spite of the fact that Halleck's forces were vastly superior to those of Beauregard. A reporter on the scene, Albert D. Richardson, wrote: "Halleck's line was ten miles in length. The grand army was like a huge serpent, with its head pinned on our left, and its tail sweeping slowly around toward Corinth. Its majestic march was so slow that the Rebels had ample warning. It was large enough to eat up Beauregard at one mouthful; but Halleck crept forward at the rate of about three-quarters of a mile per day. Thousands and thousands of his men died from fevers and diarrhea." Otto Eisenschiml and Ralph Newman, *The American Iliad: The Epic Story of the Civil War* . . . (Indianapolis 1947), 276.

*April 18th* Have had a hard time of it until about 4 o'clock since which I feel better. It was so hot that I went out in the shade and lay all day upon the ground. There is scarcely a well man in the Company. The climate, water and food has about finished us up. There was an Inspection of Arms this eve but I was not able to clean my gun. No Newspapers are allowed in camp and we do not know what is going on. We are said to be about 15 miles from Corinth — a strongly fortified place where the enemy is making a stand and preparing to give us battle. . .

*April 21st* Weather cool and chilly. Has rained for five days and the roads are impassable. This is the most Godforsaken country I ever saw. We move camp about every day and in the woods all the time. This is one vast *graveyard* and shall we never get out of it. The rains have washed the earth from the dead men and horses. *Skulls* and *toes* are sticking from beneath the clay all around and the heavy wagons *crush* the bodies turning up the bones of the buried, making this one vast Golgotha. Sometimes our tents come over a little mound where sleep some unknown soldier who has *died* for a principle but his *servivors* [*sic*] have not even marked his last resting place or given him the burial of a *faithful dog*. What a mockery these lines seem —

“Blest are the brave who sink to rest  
With all their Country's wishes blest”

*April 24th* This blank between dates was caused by my illness not having been able to write. This afternoon cannon could be heard in the direction of Corinth. There is constant skirmishing on the picket lines between the two armies. We shall have plenty to do within a few days. We have been much better to-day and hope to be ready for duty to-morrow. We can scarcely get men enough for guard duty and the few who are able have to be on about all the time. Much dissatisfaction exists in the Regiment in regard to some of our field officers. Some of whom are notoriously incompetent. The Col does not know the difference between file right and file left and is as ignorant of Military Maneuvers as a child<sup>10</sup>

*April 25th* This has been a cold and dismal day. Late this afternoon we

<sup>10</sup> The Colonel of the 15th, Hugh T. Reid, in spite of the fact that he was a “citizen soldier” like the rest of his regiment, was a capable officer. In 1863 he was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, on the recommendation of General Grant, who did not give his promotions lightly. A. A. Stuart, *Iowa Colonels and Regiments* . . . (Des Moines, 1865), 286. Boyd here displays an attitude typical of the soldiers of the Union army, who were constantly and often unduly critical of those in command.

received orders to move to the westward We took down our tents in the rain Sick men were compelled to get out and get along the best they could. Every man who could stand up had to come into the ranks The roads were awful and the mule drivers swore without ceasing Went two miles and pitched our tents in the swamp We had to cut brush to lay over the water before we could lay our blankets down to make a bed and thus we will try to sleep. On almost every side there are tents stretching away in a continuous line of battle which is many miles in length Lieut Hanks is very sick and looks dreadful bad Cunningham goes around and looks out chances to put all the work on the orderly sergt that he can

*April 26th.* . . To-day we were put into a Brigade with the 11th 13th and 16th Iowa under acting Brigadier General M. M. Crocker<sup>11</sup> . . .

*April 27th Sunday.* . . The Chaplain preached to-day in camp He gave a short and appropriate address and it was listened to with much attention He counseled the men to abstain as much as possible from Sabbath breaking and profane language I also heard *Cousin* John Steele of the 13th Ills [Iowa] preach He is an earnest good man. News came this evening that the enemy is advancing There was a great stir in camp and a close examination of guns and ammunition The enemy is not far off and we may expect a bloody battle at any time

Have been drilling about all day Lieut Col Dewey does about all the Regimental drilling Under the *inspiration* of about a quart of old Commissary he can worry us out in two hours Some of the men are sick and are so badly discouraged that nothing but the presence of death will make them move at all A great battle has seemed imminent for the last two weeks and on this account many men have been *very weak* On Dress Parade this eve news was read that New Orleans has been captured<sup>12</sup> This cheered the men much and they did make the woods ring and the cheer was taken up by other regiments and Brigades and it could be heard for miles as it rolled along the extended front

<sup>11</sup> This is the famous "Crocker's Iowa Brigade." It was the Third Brigade, Sixth Division, Army of the Tennessee. Brigadier-General Marcellus M. Crocker, of Des Moines, had studied for two years at West Point, but resigned because of ill health. He studied law at Fairfield; in 1855 he moved to Des Moines. He had entered the Union Army as a captain in Company D, 2nd Iowa, but was almost at once elected major of the Regiment. In October, 1861, he became colonel of the 13th Iowa. His Iowa Brigade became one of the most distinguished in the Army of the Tennessee. *Ibid.*, 255-64.

<sup>12</sup> New Orleans fell to Admiral Farragut on April 25, 1862.



*Advance on Corinth*

*April 29th* The roar of cannon has been heard for about two hours to the Southwest. About half past 11 o'clock we were hurried into line of battle by Col Dewey. Were ordered to prepare one days rations and be ready *within* fifteen minutes to march. At the call of the drum we came into line. With the balance of the Brigade and under the command of General Crocker we marched in a westerly direction. Did not permanently halt until about 9 o'clock at night, having marched about nine miles through a heavy forest. The air was very chilly and we were not allowed to build any fires. We tried to sleep on the cold damp ground. Saw a few cabins in the woods as we came along. Met some Cavalry who told us that they had been out to Purdy and burned a railroad Bridge<sup>13</sup>

*April 30th* At break of day we were called into line and given ten minutes to eat a "hard tack" and a little raw meat and then we went on-ward for about one mile and a half when we halted. We about faced and at 11 oclock we were back in camp. Have orders to keep one days rations in our haversacks.

*May 1st* This morning at 7 A M we struck tents and with the whole Brigade started Southwest to some unknown destination. Travelled slowly until 1 PM and in line of battle stacked arms. At sundown the wagons came up with our tents and camp equipage and we were soon keeping house. This is the best camping ground we have yet seen so I think we will not stay long. Wood and water are handy. Came six miles to day and we are now supposed to be off the old battle field of Shiloh. . .

*May 2d* We are now ten miles from [Pittsburg] Landing. Weather fine and warm. This afternoon did some washing for myself. There are thousands of troops ahead of us and we shall soon go forward again.

*May 3rd* Moved again to-day in a southwesterly direction with one days cooked rations. At 4 oclock we again pitched our tents in a wheat field. The wheat is heading out — but this is about as far as this wheat will *advance*. This days travel extended about seven or eight miles. The country has been rolling and mostly heavy timber. This evening for about one hour there was heavy cannonading south of here. Some of our troops are feeling [out] the enemies position.

<sup>13</sup> This was probably a bridge on the Mobile & Ohio R. R., which passed a few miles west of Purdy and ran through Corinth. Purdy, Tennessee, lies some twelve miles west and slightly north of Pittsburg Landing.



We are very tired and hungry but just here orderlies call beat and I had to go to Head-quarters and here Col Dewey ordered us to see that 4 days rations were cooked and to be ready to *march* The men cooked until 10 o'clock and we filled our haversacks I hope our Army will not attack the enemy to-morrow as it is Sunday and our men seem to have a dread of going into battle on that day unless in *defence* The terrible Sunday at Pittsburgh is pointed to and the reason given that the enemy was defeated because they commenced the fight on that day A great battle seems near at hand and the *fate* of one of these armies will be decided here to all appearances We have about 120,000 men here and the enemy is supposed to have about the same number We advance with no possible retreat and against strong fortifications We are going ahead with all possible assurance Genl Halleck Gen Grant and Genl Buell are all here with us<sup>14</sup> Genl Grant is hated and *despised* by all the men and cursed ever since the 6th of April. . .

*May 5th.* . . Are hourly expecting to march toward Corinth and have cooked ahead two or three days rations. . .

*May 6th* We drilled four hours to-day Major Belknap came in this evening and told us to cook 4 days rations and be prepared to march at 10 o'clock to morrow morning

*May 7th* We marched at the time named Came 2 miles and halted 2 hours in the hot sun until the Brigade could be assigned a place Our place came in a big patch of brush and we went to grubbing. E. P. Bye and I made a bed of round poles Saw the 3d Iowa and they are camped near us.<sup>15</sup> The same rolling land and heavy timber continues The farms we saw are almost all deserted and the fences burned up In front of our Camp is a heavy fortification and is designed to keep our *relatives* within from coming out too hastily No one seems to know much about this coun-

<sup>14</sup> Halleck, who took command of the army after Shiloh, had three armies under him: the Army of the Ohio, commanded by Don Carlos Buell; the Army of the Mississippi, commanded by John Pope; and the Army of the Tennessee, commanded by George H. Thomas. Grant was second in command of the whole. Thomas' army, to which Crocker's Iowa Brigade was attached, was on the right; Buell was in the center; and Pope on the left wing of the advance on Corinth. The three armies numbered about 120,000 men; Beauregard at Corinth had an estimated strength of about 70,000. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:371-2, 376.

<sup>15</sup> For the experiences of the 3rd and other Iowa regiments in this advance, see Thompson, *Recollections with the Third Iowa*, Henry H. Wright, *A History of the Sixth Iowa Infantry* (Iowa City, 1923); Olynthus B. Clark (ed.), *Downing's Civil War Diary* [11th Iowa] (Des Moines, 1916).

try nor what the enemy is doing The siege of Corinth will now commence and we may now say this is the "First Epistle to the Corinthians". . .

May 9th. . . Heavy cannonading has been going on all day in a southeasterly direction<sup>16</sup>

May 10th No wind stirring and the day has been hot. Were notified this forenoon to be ready with one days rations in haversacks and to be ready to march at a moments warning Just at 12 o'clock we were ordered into line and started southeast. Marched until about 5 o'clock and halted Co "G" was ordered to report at Hd quarters for "Picket" duty Major Belknap acted as *guide* and went with us out one mile and a half where we went on duty — putting out 27 men and keeping 12 men for a Reserve

May 11th Nothing in the shape of an enemy disturbed us last night, and nothing alarmed us more than the shadow of some bush or the dark form of an old stump The owls *booted* around in the trees and made it seem lonely But we prefer owls or any other birds to *secesh* About 12 o'clock at night I being a sergt of the guard went around to relieve the pickets and as I was going through some thick brush and not counting correctly I had got one post too far and came upon a green Dutchman belonging to another command As a streak of moonlight came through the trees and a little rustling of the bushes revealed me to him he yelled H-a-l-t The Dutchman was behind a tree with his bayonet fixed I of course *halted* when he said who comes *dere* I answered "Friend with the countersign" Said he *advance* and give the countersign As soon as I advanced he cocked his musket and took *aim* at me and yelled "Corporal of the guard" and at the same time told me not to move and *I did not move* When the Corporal came I went forward and gave him the countersign (which was Lexington) and it was all right Were not relieved until 8 o'clock I shall never forget this our first night on "Picket" nor the excited Dutchman

May 12th Weather very hot Our camp is on the southern slope of a hill News came to-day that Memphis has been taken and also Island No. 10. Also Norfolk Va<sup>17</sup> and another rumor says the enemy is about to

<sup>16</sup> Skirmishes between opposing picket lines took place almost constantly during this advance. This incident probably was that around Farmington, Mississippi. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. X, Part I, 729.

<sup>17</sup> This illustrates the age-old unreliability of camp gossip. Island No. 10 had been captured by Union forces on April 7; while Memphis, Tennessee, did not fall until June 6. Norfolk, Virginia, had been captured on May 9, and the news could have reached the troops before Corinth by this time.

evacuate Corinth Lieut Col Dewey called all the Orderlies up to his tent this eve and gave us a grand old *Cussing* because we do not get more men out to drill He swore if we did not do better he would have us all reduced to the *ranks*. (I do not care a red if he does) He also went around the officers tents and gave them a blessing according to the strength of the Commissary he had aboard

*May 13th* This morning we received orders to be ready to move — but were ordered out to drill awhile and kept at it until 10 o'clock when we were recalled and got into line and at 12 oclock marched out on the main road leading to Corinth and went straight forward for two miles and camped in the thick timber on the right of the road Have lots of grubbing to do to make a camping place and a drill ground Are said to be within 4 miles of the "Corinthians"

Weather still hot. Hanks being away Capt C[unningham] wants me to sleep in his tent with him He seems to be very *homesick* and tells me he thinks if the *diarrhea* that is now on him lasts a few weeks more he will not be *alive* Weather very hot and an *insect* called "*gray back*" is visiting quite numerously in our camp and has nearly got possession of some of the men

*May 14th* We were given today to wash our clothes and clean up Col Reid took command in place of Lieut Col Dewey This evening heavy cannonadding was heard to the west<sup>18</sup> Probably our men shelling the woods to find out the whereabouts of the enemy. Water is scarce and we have to dig wells here.

*May 15th* Weather sultry This morning we got orders to have two days rations in our haversacks and to be prepared to *march* At 11 oclock we were called into line and with the whole Brigade went south quarter of a mile on the Northern side of an open field where our batteries were *masked* We remained here until 2 o'clock when we came back to camp A large force went toward Corinth and we were ordered out as a reserve — A rumor says Corinth has been evacuated Only 33 of our Company were out to-day. Some of the balance were sick and some had the cannon fever. . .

*May 17th* Last night there was a great deal of picket firing in front and on the right or west of us. Lay on our arms all night in line of battle. Were

<sup>18</sup> Raids on the two railroads which crossed at Corinth, the Mobile & Ohio and the Memphis & Charleston, took place on May 14. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. X, Part I, 660.



relieved at 10 o'clock and pulled up stakes and went two miles southeast. Our pickets and scouts drove the enemy's outposts all the way firing over every foot of ground. Saw *six dead men* of the enemies who were killed as we advanced. We had several wounded — We are to-night camped in a dense heavy wood and very close to the Rebs. Some of the officers look a good deal *worried* this evening. The artillerymen are throwing up breastworks until late tonight.

Only 34 of our Company able to march to-day. Have had nothing to eat all day but a hard tack and a piece of raw meat roasted on a stick — Heavy artillery firing all day toward the west. The muskets have been cracking close ahead of us all day. Weather hot and dry.

*Siege of Corinth*

*May 18th Sunday* There was a great deal of picket firing all last night. Detailed 10 men to build breastworks. Thousands of men are felling timbers and digging like beavers. Went over to the 13th and saw Cousin John Steele. While there several rebel cannon balls came over from the "Corinthians". Heavy works are building around the entire line which must be about 12 miles. They are about four feet high made of solid timber in front (or on our side) and ties about ten feet long run out. The base is about 10 feet wide and at the top four feet thick. Openings for cannon are made at intervals. The ditch is dug out on our side of the work which gives the men better protection. This eve we are ordered to have 2 days rations in our haversacks. A rumor is out that we will assault the enemies works to-morrow and the consequence is that the *sick list* is largely *increased*. If this should prove *true* that we make a *raid* tomorrow I have got a good big *Corn cake* and a bottle of *molasses* and *three* potatoes which I shall carry with me into the disturbance.

Capt Cunningham is getting quite *feeble* at the same time quite *confidential*. He says he is either going *home* or he is going to make some *money*. He says there will be some fine chances to steal cotton after awhile and that if any chance comes close to him it shall not pass. He says it don't make any *difference* how a man *makes* his money just so he has plenty of it (I think it does and if this is the *key* to this mans soul he will bear watching).

Capt Cunningham says he wants me to tell the men who lounge around his tent and pick off *gray backs* on a hot day that it is very *disagreeable* to him and must be *stoped*. Oh yes said I *certainly*. Guess when I go and



tell those poor emaciated sick boys (some of whom are not many days travel from their graves) why I will set up all night and catch *gray backs* and put them in a pin-box and empty them under the fly of his tent *that's all* If he had one half the courage of a healthy *gray back* he would tell them himself

*May 19th* Received orders to march at 10 o'clock At that time we had tents struck and knapsacks all packed Just then word came that the Rebs were advancing upon us, and we were again ordered *not to move* Only 25 effective men could be got into line The mumps are raging in the Army and every other disease known to human beings I have the jaundice and am as yellow as a Yankee pumpkin and so billious I cannot keep anything down that I eat and oh how sick I am (especially when I hear the *pickets* firing) All the officers trunks and valuables were taken to the rear to-day and this eve they were brought back again It looks like it was even *dangerous* to be *safe*. Heavy firing all around and we can hear our shells burst over in the enemies lines

*May 20th* Hard rain last night and to-day is cloudy Heavy artillery fire all day but mostly on our left in Shermans Division or Corps. The rebs throw shells into Shermans camps. . . The cars seem to be busy over in Corinth. We can hear them whistle and running day and night<sup>19</sup> Genl Mitchell joined Genl Pope on the east to-day with 20,000 more men and more reinforcements are coming to help *bag* this batch of Rebs All able bodied men are at work on the entrenchments

*May 21st* This has been a very exciting day in camp At 10 oclock the Union Brigade moved over on our right over one mile in advance of the line of entrenchments in order to erect new works The enemies out-posts resisted this most savagely and with three or four Regiments of Infantry hurried up gave our men a warm time Our side brought up a few pieces of art[illery] and held their ground Orders again to have two days rations in our haversacks A continuous crash of musketry continued all day at the front which sounded like a general engagement A number of men have been killed on both sides to-day Several Commissioned officers

<sup>19</sup> "Trains of cars were heard coming in and going out of Corinth constantly. Some of the men who had been engaged in various capacities on the railroads before the war claimed that they could tell, by putting their ears to the rail, not only which way the trains were moving but which trains were loaded and which were empty. They said loaded trains had been going out for several days and empty ones coming in. Subsequent events proved the correctness of their judgment." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:380.

of our Regiment have *resigned* of late and gone home Capt [Wilson T.] Smith Co "B" Lieut [Charles M. I.] Reynolds Co "D" and Lieut [Ebenezer E.] Herbert Co "C" have disappeared A good many straight guesses are made as to why men *resign* about such a time as this Those who cannot resign will of course have to remain I hear of no men who carry a *musket* resigning.

May 22d Weather warm and a great amount of shooting on the picket line last night and at day break a heavy skirmish occurred in front of our camp Col Reid was around among the tents at 4 o'clock telling the men (in a *whisper*) that we were expecting an attack and to be up and into line

May 23d Weather cloudy and wet Have been unwell all day I can't eat — have the jaundice too bad. Shuler of "K" ran away from the Hospital at Monterey back ten miles — and came running into camp crazy as a *bed bug* He had torn most of his clothing off and all bruised and a horrible sight. 16 men was all we could get out to drill to-day

May 24th Rained all last night Have been helping to fix up some bunks for the sick boys Charley Nicholls is very sick and I think a few more days will take him *from here* All the men look bad Their energy and ambition has almost left them All of them have the diarrhea and are scarcely able to take care of themselves The *dead march* can be heard at all times from sun up until sun down in the camps around us — as they take one, two or three poor fellows and lay them in this cold and dismal wilderness in graves to be forever unknown Not even a coffin is provided Lumber cannot be had. Shuler who came in crazy yesterday died to-day If we remain here until July but few will be *alive* Some of the men joke and laugh while they are laying out the dead and seem to think nothing of it How inhuman and wicked this thing called War It brutalizes men and crushes out all Christian feeling

May 25th Sunday A fine day. Had Reg Inspection at 10 o'clock and I had a time getting the poor sick fellows out — or enough of sick and well to make any kind of a showing for a Company After inspection the Chaplain preached Have had some rest today If the people at home knew how the sick soldiers are treated in this Army there would be such a howl of indignation and cursing as would make the country *tremble* There is said to be 25,000 sick men in this Army The officers nearly all want to go *home* but had rather see their men buried than let them leave if they knew they would get well by going away a few weeks. . . .

Three of our company died yesterday — Jeffries the *semi* colored man and little Lewis Skank and Charles Nicholls. The two latter had the typhoid fever and Jeffries had an arm amputated since the battle of Shiloh. I ate a lot of *desicated* (should be desecrated) vegetables yesterday and they have made me the sickest of my life. I shall never want any more such fodder. Serg't Dan Embree has the mumps and he lies on his back in a little wedge tent standing in the sun. He is "Commissary" for the Company and the hard tack and *sow-belly* are all around him. The heat is about 120 deg inside the tent and the grease is running away and leaving nothing but the skin of the hog, the hard tack and Dan. I think this is a good time *not* to have the mumps. . .

#### *Evacuation of Corinth*

May 30th A series of heavy explosions occurred about 5 o'clock this morning to the southwest which evidently were not cannon. 10 o'clock news just came that the enemy has crawled out of Corinth and left us *holding the bag*. The explosion this morning was caused by the enemy blowing up some buildings and magazines which they would not *take* with them. Some of our men are said to be in Corinth now.

Later Several of our regiments have just come from Corinth and say the town is *deserted* and almost everything destroyed. Our Cavalry have gone in pursuit southward. Some say they are glad they did not stay to make any more *disturbance* and some say they are sorry they have gone. These latter fellows are probably *lying*. For one I am glad they are gone and they have my permission to keep going. Hardly a soldier in the whole Army but knew more than one week ago that they were going to *retreat* because we could hear the cars running day & night<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Halleck's dilatory operations before Corinth had been, in Grant's opinion, wrong; but Halleck overrode any objections from his subordinate, whom he disliked. The evacuation of Corinth came, to many of the officers, as an anti-climax. Grant wrote: "The possession of Corinth by the National troops was of strategic importance, but the victory was barren in every other particular. It was nearly bloodless. It is a question whether the *morale* of the Confederate troops engaged at Corinth was not improved by the immunity with which they were permitted to remove all public property and then withdraw themselves. On our side I know officers and men of the Army of the Tennessee—and I presume the same is true of those of the other commands—were disappointed at the result. They could not see how the mere occupation of places was to close the war while large and effective rebel armies existed. They believed that a well-directed attack would at least have partially destroyed the army defending Corinth. For myself I am satisfied that Corinth could have been captured in a two days' campaign commenced promptly on the arrival of reinforcements after the battle of Shiloh." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:381.



*May 31st* Have had a half day to clean up and wash There has been heavy cannonading all day to the South and it is becoming more distant Genl Pope is in hot pursuit of the flying foe. . . .<sup>21</sup>

*June 4th* Received pay to-day for 4 months Jan'y 1st to May 1st My own was \$80.00 Most of the privates were paid in \$50.00 bills (green-backs) . . .

*June 6th.* . . . When we got back to camp [from a trip to Hamburg] we found tents gone and the regiment had gone away We followed on after and went through Corinth which has been a good sized town Has a brick Court House and a few good business houses One large Hotel called the "Tishomingo House" Ruin and destruction mark the place The Rebel Army took everything for use and when they left destroyed all they could Our men are repairing the Railroads After leaving Corinth we came out one mile and one half southwest and here we found the Regt. . . .

*June 10th.* . . . Major Belknap has command of the Regiment — all the men like him and he knows more about tactics and drilling than all the bal[ance] of the field officers will ever know in their lives. . .

*June 15th Sunday* We had Regimental Inspection at 9 o'clock after which the men scattered off in all directions Have been in camp all day Among the 16th Iowa in camp near us there are a great many sick men and many dying Col Chambers Regt They find one or two dead every morning sometimes in their beds and other times out in the woods The men are mostly Germans and are a dirty set

*June 16th* Went on Picket this morning out about one mile and one half We were strung out on a pleasant ridge in the woods About noon three cows came along and we put them in a pen and the boys milked them every ten minutes by the "watch" It is a nice thing to have a little fresh milk in the family Saw a few prisoners come in also a citizen who said he was tired of war and hoped it would soon end. . .

*June 23d* Some of the boys went out into the woods this morning and got some fresh meat which they call "Venison" but almost any one else would call it pork An overseer living close was in camp this morning looking for 19 Negroes that had run away and said he could not hear from them I guess he will not hear from them until *Gabriel calls* This morning Tie Shepherd and I went to a house and asked a young lady at the door

<sup>21</sup> Both Pope and Buell went in pursuit of the Confederates under Beauregard, but abandoned the task after about 30 miles, and returned to Corinth. *Ibid.*, 1:382.



if she would sell us some milk She said she would and filled our canteens We paid her 25 cents apiece and came back to camp When we examined the milk we found it *sour* and had to throw it away Besides it spoiled our canteens But such are the *Secesh*

*Camp East of Corinth*

*July 2d* Between these dates we have been following the same old routine with nothing new to record. We have drilled and drilled in the hot sun and finally moved our camp to the suburbs on the East side of Corinth We are situated in the open woods where there is but little shade yet the timber has been cleared out and the air can circulate. The ground has been an old rebel camp and the rubbish and filth that usually accumulates is all here and more too including several millions of *fleas* and active gray backs that were not so much afraid of us as their owners were Thousands of feet of good lumber lay scattered all over the ground and which we have fallen heir to. The 15th Regt is detailed as Provost Guard and we have been on duty a few days General Hallecks headquarters are in town Two Divisions are left here to guard and hold the place They are the 2d and the 6th Div of the Army of the Tennessee

Sargt Dan Embree and I went down the Railroad and gathered a fine lot of blackberries which by the way are curing myself and others I almost live on them and can eat a *peck* at a meal

*July 3d* Weather hot and sultry Last night there was a grand *row* close to camp between some soldiers at a house of "ill fame" About one dozen shots were fired which thoroughly aroused the camp and all sprang into their clothes and grabbed their guns . . .

*July 4th* Glorious day. Hot clear and dusty Got a Pass about 9 A M and went down town The streets were full of soldiers and teams The Sutlers (the greatest curse of the Army) did well They sold a great quantity of goods and made a lot of money They are the buzzards that follow the Army Took dinner at the Tishomingo Hotel kept by Herman Wells formerly of Indianola The best thing we had was ice water In the evening I received two letters and a package of the Indianola "Visitor" from home. Various rumors are in camp about a battle fought by McClellan near Richmond Va<sup>22</sup> These rumors have a tremendous effect upon men

<sup>22</sup> This was probably news of one of the many defeats of the inept General George B. McClellan in the Peninsular Campaign. For a description of this campaign, see Kenneth P. Williams, *Lincoln Finds a General* (2 vols., New York, 1949), 1:214-41.

as we gain or lose at distance points So goes the thermometer of our hopes and fears in other places

July 5th Have been sick all day Too much Tishomingo ice water &c

July 6th Sunday Bad news from McClellan Army Report says he lost 30,000 men and has fallen back fifteen miles Rebel loss 20,000 men The Rebels around here are jubilant and say that Beauregard will be back in a few days and drive us out of these pleasant camping grounds and that he is already close with a large army These people are either deceived or else Beauregard is a *fool* We have *settled* here to remain Went to see a large mineral spring two miles from here South It is sulphurous and comes up into a large stone basin

The Chaplain is not here now and we have no preaching and Sunday goes like every other day Men are playing cards all through camp — selling beer, cooking pies to sell &c This evening I went over North to see the Rebel grave yard where lie buried 2500 Confederate soldiers the most of whom perished from wounds received at Shiloh — and from sickness They have been buried in trenches and laid one above another and some places are *seven deep* The trenches were continued from day to day as the mortality called for Here no marble marks the last resting place of our foes — A paling at the head and a hoop pole tells where lie the *dead* How sad to look on this scene These silent foes no longer face our flag The memory of their hate lies buried with them We can but feel that they were mistaken and deceived and deplore the fate that overtook them Very few officers are buried here The most of the graves are newly made and a large majority are marked Louisiana troops

July 7th There is a universal *depression* in camp at the bad news from Virginia. McClellan is no doubt defeated with immense losses Lieut Hanks is back with us. Lieut Fisk is a prisoner His folks at home have heard from him at Montgomery Ala We have 61 men present, 46 for duty 15 absent sick 10 absent with leave and one on detached service My health and appetite are very treacherous Many of the citizens around here are coming in with produce They ask 10c per lb for meat. (We can get it cheaper than that) . . .

July 9th Went out hunting blackberries and found any quantity of them — filled my bucket and hat and came to camp bareheaded in the hot sun Great *drunk* in camp Old Sergt Gray had it bad Genl "Beauregard" of Co "K" was on a tremendous spree Rumor says Genl Bragg is

coming against us<sup>23</sup> News from Va is suppressed and we can learn nothing more. . .

*July 15th* The men are beginning to feel too well and some of them stay up about all night to play tricks on one another The favorite sport is to find some fellow lying asleep and pitch a bucket of water on him — then run and hide in his tent where he is snoring away in a quarter of a minute after he has thrown the water In these nocturnal sports the innocent often suffer with the guilty

*July 16th.* . . Corinth is full of “fast womin” who have come in within a few days and are demoralizing many of the men and with the help of bad whiskey will lay many of them out. The buildings in town are all rented to sutlers merchants and saloon men which bring in a good sum of rent which goes into the Provost “Fund” and is used by the Marshal for the benefit of the Army Major Belknap has been Marshal but is sick now Any man found in town without a Pass goes to the guard house. . . The Regt is decreasing in numbers of about 8 or 9 per day by discharge and desertion Officers wages have been reduced by Congress of late and Capt C says he does not like it much. . .

*July 17th.* . . Embree, McVey and Shepherd and myself made a little foraging trip after the twilight hours We found *three fowls* high upon an apple tree near the house of a *Native* We took them under our wings and brought them along to camp If it had not been for the *dog* we might have got a few more McClellan rests with his Army on the “James” river 17 miles from Richmond Va

*July 19th* Saw Quarter Master Geo W Clark of the 3d Iowa on his way home He has resigned. He was stoping at the Tishomingo House Great excitement prevails all over the North. 300,000 more are called for by “old Abe” and volunteering goes on briskly This is no 90 days war. . .

*July 23d* Have been very busy all day with Company business. I have the *blues* and am sick of the way things are managed around the Post The Officers seem to run everything to make *money* for themselves Things seem to be getting rather loose. . .

*July 27th* We have orders to be ready to march with two days Rations in haversacks and three days in wagons The whole camp is noisy with preparation The camp fires to-night look brilliant over the hills as the

<sup>23</sup> General Braxton Bragg had replaced Beauregard in command of the Confederate troops in the West.



men are cooking their provisions Rumor says we will go to Bolivar 45 miles Northwest Reveille will be at 2 A.M

*March to Bolivar Tennessee*<sup>24</sup>

*July 28th* At 4 o'clock A M we marched The other three Regiments of the Brigade are along Went four miles North and passed the last of the field fortifications. We had a guide who was a Citizen and from some suspicious circumstance he was put under *arrest* and sent back Before noon about one half the men had thrown away their Knapsacks and Clothing (Extra) and the whole line of March was lined with cast off equipment and clothing Tall hats with the bird of our country reposing thereon lay strewed in every direction The sun shone desperately hot and water was scarce and the officers on *horse-back* kept leading on Crossed the Memphis & Charleston RR at a little town in the woods called Chewalla where some Missouri troops were stationed Camped at night Ate a few roasting ears and lay down tired

*July 29th* Reveille beat at 3 A.M My feet hurt me so badly that I could scarcely get up We found all the Peaches, apples and green corn we wanted Built a Bridge over the Tuscumbia River and crossed thereon Heavy timber and hills surround it The timber is Oak Chestnut and Pine. . .

*July 30th* Had a little shower of rain last night The country traveled over to-day has been quite good and well cultivated At noon we had a heavy rain which wet us *through* Camp to-night close to a field of good roasting ears. There is no *price* set on this Corn as the owner is *absent* The men have cleaned up all the poultry yards for about two miles each side the line of march Saw men carrying their boots by the straps while two or three chickens heads would be sticking out.

*July 31st* Hundreds of Negroes flock after us and don't seem to be afraid of the soldiers They yelled and shouted and said "day was glad to see Uncle Sams boys" With all their ignorance they seem to have pretty good ideas as to what is going on and I think it will not be many months until their influence will be felt in the scale

About 10 oclock we came to Bolivar a beautiful town and surrounded by

<sup>24</sup> This march to Bolivar was to relieve a Union force there under attack. Grant was now in command at Corinth; Halleck had been given command of all the armies on July 11, and had left for Washington. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:392-3, 396; Williams, *Lincoln Finds a General*, 1:251. Bolivar, Tennessee, is north and west of Corinth, on the Hatchie River.



a splendid country My feet were worn out when we halted and we were all very tired upon this our really first march Dan and I put up our little tent and will sleep in it to-night I think our tramp has been useless as there is no enemy here in arms

*Camp at Bolivar Tennessee*

*Aug 1st* We have a fine camping ground with good spring water handy and are located in fine shady woods. Have been busy all day cleaning off the grounds. The Hatchie River a fine large stream runs close to our camp About 4000 soldiers were in bathing this eve

*Aug 2d* Sergt Dan Embree, Amos H. Gray and myself are in a mess together Gray is an old Mexican soldier and a graduate in the foraging business What he dont know will not be found out by the bal of us for a long time To-day we went out about two miles and found about 8 acres of a Peach orchard The fruit is the finest I ever saw and the trees were loaded down with fruit We filled our haversacks and came to camp

In the afternoon nearly all of Co "G" went out and we were loaded to the guards with Peaches and on our way home through the thick woods when a squad of armed Pickets took us prisoners and marched us to the headquarters of the officer of the Day who happened to be a Capt in a Ohio Regt. We were kept under guard until almost sundown, when by some desperately hard pleading the Capt let us go to Camp The trouble was our getting outside the picket line There was no picket line when we went out but was thrown out after we left camp We also run a great risk from the rebel cavalry which infest this part of the Country

*March to Toombs [Toone's] Station Tennessee*

*Aug 3d Sunday* This forenoon passed off quietly but at noon Lieut Hanks notified us that our Company was ordered to march with two days rations I hurried the men up and soon had them in line Company "E" went along and we were under the Command of Major [William] Purcell of the 16th Ia The day was the hottest of the year but we marched a distance of 8 miles in a northerly direction which brought us to Toombs sta on the Jackson railroad We will sleep in the new Depot to-night. I did not like to march to-day because it was Sunday. . .

*Aug 4th* Company "E" found a dressed sheep somewhere this morning Major Purcell gave them a healthy old lecture and told the men they would not be allowed to *kill sheep* even if they were away from *home* and that hereafter such men would be severely *punished* Notwithstanding all this

I noticed several pieces of fresh meat coming into camp about noon, and strange as it may appear there was not a hungry man in camp that day

*Aug 5th* Weather very hot. Several of us went to a house and had a good dinner of Peach Cobbler, New Potatoes &c We enjoyed the meal and no mistake They charged us only 25 cts apiece which was cheap enough

*Aug 6th* This morning we went out and found plenty of Peaches. Dan and I found a sweet potatoe patch — when we had fairly got down to work digging potatoes a man came out of a house near by with a *gun* at sight of which we silently crept away and *forgot* to leave what potatoes we had dug At 3 o'clock a train (freight) came down from Jackson and we got aboard and came down to Bolivar and into camp A man *died* in Co "E" this eve who was walking around an hour before.

*Camp Bolivar Tennessee*

*Aug 7th* Bat drill at 5 oclock this AM and Co drill at 4 P M. I could not attend the latter as I had my clothes in the *suds* The mess business was to-day broken up and the whole Co was consolidated and men detailed to cook I do not like the arrangement Levi Kerr and the two Essex boys are to do the cooking for the Company. . .

*Aug 9th* Some of the men went out foraging with an escort to-day They brought in a lot of Peaches &c We are living on the substance of the enemy now.<sup>25</sup>

*Aug 10th Sunday* Had Regimental Inspection at 10 oclock This afternoon I attended a Negro Meeting — About twenty old Negroes run the Noisy part of it and two or three hundred lazy darkeys lay around in the sun and listened Some of them were playing cards and some *marbles* and others were asleep They were dressed in all colors and styles of clothing but most of them were very ragged. . .

*Aug 11th* Weather hot and I have remained in camp all day or until this evening when Howard Cunningham Dave Myers and I slipped out of camp — dodged up a hollow between two picket posts and went into the country about 2½ miles to inspect a peach orchard and one or two *barn yards*, and finally came back loaded and crawled back through the picket line and into Camp. . .

*Aug 13th* A large foraging party was detailed to-day to go out and

<sup>25</sup> "On the 2d of August I was ordered from Washington to live upon the country, on the resources of citizens hostile to the government, so far as practicable." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:397.

bring in what it would find A strong guard went along The party returned with several wagon loads of stuff

*Aug 14th* This has been the hottest day I have seen in the South Half a dozen of our Company went out foraging and brought in two barrels of peaches, a lot of green corn, chickens, Butter &c Wrote a letter for Indianola Visitor

*Aug 15th* Lieut Col Dewey has been appointed Colonel of the 23d Iowa Infy When this news came the men all through the Regt *cheered* and the cheer finally died into a *groan*. It all meant the same thing We are glad he is going to leave

*Aug 16th* We can scarcely keep warm under two blankets these nights The Chaplain came back this eve also John Boothe and Wm Parker Gen Banks and Stonewell Jackson have had a bloody fight on the Shenandoah in Va with heavy losses on both sides.<sup>26</sup>

*Aug 17th Sunday* The Chaplain preached at 11 o'clock

*Aug 18th* A salute was fired in honor of Martin Van Buren — Ex President who has just died Had a General Muster and this evening we have orders to prepare the usual "two days rations" and to be ready to march at 6 A. M tomorrow

*Camp at Hardeman Springs Tennessee*

*Aug 19th* This morning at 7 o'clock we started south and traveled about five miles and halted at some celebrated springs called Hardemans Soon an order came for Lieut Hanks and 22 men to go  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles and guard some cotton<sup>27</sup> Fifteen of us were left in camp but were afterwards detailed on Picket and were posted  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile out

*Aug 20th* We were up at cock-crowing this morning and pumped several

<sup>26</sup> Probably the Battle of Cedar Mountain near Culpeper, Virginia, Aug. 9, 1862. See Williams, *Lincoln Finds a General*, 1:266-72.

<sup>27</sup> "Among other embarrassments . . . was the fact that the government wanted to get out all the cotton possible from the South and directed me to give every facility toward that end. Pay in gold was authorized, and stations on the Mississippi River and on the railroad in our possession had to be designated where cotton would be received. This opened to the enemy not only the means of converting cotton into money, which had a value all over the world and which they so much needed, but it afforded them means of obtaining accurate and intelligent information in regard to our position and strength. It was also demoralizing to the troops. Citizens obtaining permits from the treasury department had to be protected within our lines and given facilities to get out cotton by which they realized enormous profits. Men who had enlisted to fight the battles of their country did not like to be engaged in protecting a traffic which went to the support of an enemy they had to fight. . . ." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:399-400.



cows dry before the owners were out of bed We filled a large kittle full of ripe peaches and with our sugar we had a good long old breakfast Went back to the Springs and established ourselves there There are *five* separate and distinct Springs here and each of them said to be a different kind of water One is sulphur and one Iron and the others are different All said to possess valuable medical properties

A building in octagonal shape surrounds each spring On the steep hill side is a long string of log and frame buildings designed as Hotel, Bath Rooms &c for the convenience of persons attending the place An old Negro who was a servant here told us it was a great place for *de* gemmen to *hab* pleasure But said he *dey* take no pleasure hereabouts *now* The water boils up above the top of the basins and is cold and clear while all around are large and handsome shade trees and the ground all covered with a beautiful carpet of grass. There is a Ball alley here and the men make constant use of it

*Aug 21st* Weather fine Took a good bath this morning Several of us went out and got all the peaches we wanted and the very finest too. No men are at home through this country They are in the Southern army The boys brought in a lot of chickens to-day Old Sergt Gray is the champion *forager* of the Regt and Co When Gray cannot find fresh meat it is of no use for any other man to look. . .

*Aug 22d* The Buildings here are being taken for Hospitals and all the sick are being brought from Bolivar Went out to forage a little this afternoon While coming in saw some teams making for camp with all the speed that could be got out of the mule teams The drivers were *lashing* and pounding the mules and making *splendid* time The teamster yelled at us and said the Rebs were coming down on us When we came to camp we could not hear anything more about the Rebs

*Aug 23d* An order came to us this morning to allow no man to leave camp as an attack by the enemy was expected at any moment. The suspicion was excited by the fact that there was a large meeting of the *Secesh* at Bolivar this afternoon and some treachery may be anticipated

*Aug 24th Sunday.* 28 of Co "G" were out on Picket to-day News comes that Genl McClellan has *crawfished* from the Peninsula Brig Genl McClermand is here now<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Maj.-Gen. John A. McClermand had been given command of the troops in this area on June 24, 1862. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part II, 31.



Contrabands (a new name for the Negro slaves) are building forts around here and falling trees across the roads to keep the enemies cavalry from surprising us. A good many soldiers and people are *bitterly* opposed to having "Niggers" take any hand in this War. I am not one of those kind of people. If a *culled* man will dig trenches and chop down timber and even fight the enemy he is just the fellow we want and the sooner we recognize this the quicker the war will *end*. . .

*Aug 26th* Weather fine and clear. On Picket. A large foraging expedition composed of the 16th Ia which has been gone four or five days returned last evening and brought back with them 400 "contrabands" 30 mules, 12 wagons and a large amount of other Captures. This morning the camp was alive with colored men women and children hunting situations in the Brigade as cooks or any kind of servants for "*de Union boys*". Our Company took three big strong darkies to cook. But one of them ran away before noon and the other two look as if they would run any time. They were too much *overjoyed* at the idea of being *free* and well they may be. . .

*Camp at Bolivar Tennessee*

*Aug 29th* Left the Springs (much to our regret) and came back to Bolivar. The road was awful dusty and we had rather a tough time getting in. When we arrived the news had come that 6000 cavalry supposed to be the advance guard of Price's army from the Southwest were advancing upon us. The rumor may be true but I do not believe it. These stories are getting to be too common.

*Aug 30* This afternoon there was a big *scare* and grave rumors that an attack was momentarily expected. We were warned by a despatch from Corinth that 6000 Rebel Cavalry were coming down on this point. At Noon the assembly beat and we fell into line with the inevitable 40 rounds and canteens filled with water. We marched through Bolivar in quick time with the dust six inches deep and the temperature at about 100° in the shade. The men women and children stood in groups about the houses with a look of anxiety contempt and scorn as we passed by.

On we went through clouds of dust so dense that we could not see one rod ahead. Halted south of town about one Mile by which time we were about *gone up* with thirst and heat. Loaded guns. A squad of our Cavalry came down the road on which we were placed under full *gallop* and Col

Reid counter marched us We went back  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile and tore down a fence and marched into a corn field Here we laid on the ground  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour and then we marched back again into the lane and toward camp  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile and formed again in line of *battle* By this time the sun had set and *no blood been shed* except four or five wounded cavalymen who were brought in this evening<sup>29</sup>

*Aug 31st Sunday* About 2 o'clock this morning Col Reid came "whispering" around the tents and *warned* the men to be prepared to *fight* In a short time the most of us in line went to sleep and slept until morning We had no blankets with us and our bed was in an old Rye field We just wallowed around in the dirt and slept "bully" The field on which we slept was on the farm of Edwin Polk who is a nephew of the deceased President Polk and the said Edwin Polk Esq being absent from his agricultural occupation — took a hand in the fracas at Shiloh and came out a prisoner with the loss of one *leg* His house a large frame building was deserted and wagon loads of Papers were scattered around over the plantation

Cavalry from the front report the enemy about five miles away and camped on a creek I was sent back to camp to gather up some provisions but had only got there when the Regt came in Dr Gibbons our Surgeon came in from the front and says no enemy is near us He saw Lieut Col Hoag of 2d Ills Cavalry with *seven* bullet holes through his body and the hogs had eaten nearly all the face off<sup>30</sup> He also found one of our men and one of the enemy wounded The Rebs had 500 mounted men Sixty-five men of the 20th Ohio were captured yesterday Col Reid commanded our Brigade and Col Crocker the Post Railroad torn up and the telegraph lines cut all around Thus ended this miserable affair Had to make out several Reports and Muster Rolls to-day

*Sept 1st* Reveille at 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  o'clock this morning. Had the men out in quick time with Arms. Were ordered to cook and eat breakfast and to be ready to march immediately But after all we did not March These false alarms and orders and *counter orders* wear men out but I suppose we are

<sup>29</sup> The 15th Iowa evidently was too late at this engagement to be of much use. Actually, the "skirmish" lasted about 7 hours, from about 9 in the morning until 4 in the afternoon, in which about 900 Union troops met and drove off an attack of 6,000 Confederates, with a loss of 5 men killed, 18 wounded, and 64 missing. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 45-9.

<sup>30</sup> Colonel Harvey Hogg had been killed leading a charge of cavalry on Aug. 30. *Ibid.*, 48.

here to be worn out or put to any use the officers see fit Heavy cannon-ading all the forenoon in the direction of Toombs station<sup>31</sup>

Sept 2d At 1 o'clock this morning I was awakened by the noise of wagons and teams and the busy hum of voices in camp But concluded I would take another *nap* before Reveille At 3 o'clock drums beat and we were hurried up to learn that the Rebel Genl Sterling Price<sup>32</sup> (formerly of Missouri) would perhaps *attempt* to take *breakfast* with us with 30,000 of his *friends* who were along with him and not being prepared to accommodate so many at a regular meal we might be able by early rising to *dish* them up something as they were reported to be *seven* miles way We packed Knapsacks and had tents and baggage all loaded in the wagons by sun up and were ready for anything But no "further orders" until 9 o'clock when we were started from our old camp and went out near one of the forts which had two guns Co "B" and "A" were thrown out as Pickets or skirmishers. Here were all the wagons and Baggage of the Brigade down in a *hollow* From here we were marched behind a heavy embankment near the Railroad — stacked arms and broke ranks

Lieut Hanks said it looked like we were going to *surrender* and I noticed two or three big *tears* in his eyes as he whispered to some of us News came to us that Bolivar had [been] *surrendered* by the troops there The enemy was said to be 30,000 strong Many of the officers looked pale and depressed about this time The contrabands were also *panic* stricken and one or two hundred were running around and most of them women and loaded down with old beds, cooking utensils and old traps of no use to any body. We were supposed to have about 6,500 men and could make a good show for a fight even if we were outnumbered Horses, mules, sutlers, niggers were all mixed up and jamed into the hollow we were a hard looking crowd anyway

*Evening* The *panic* is over and we now understand that the large force thought to be around here existed more in the imagination than any place

<sup>31</sup> Col. E. S. Dennis of the 30th Illinois, with the 20th Illinois, two companies of cavalry, and two pieces of artillery—in all some 800 men—was attacked by seven cavalry regiments, consisting of about 5,000. After about a four-hour battle, Col. Dennis remained in possession of the field, with 5 dead, while the enemy retired with a loss of 400 killed and wounded. *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>32</sup> Maj.-Gen. Sterling Price had been given command of the Confederate Army of the West on July 3, 1862. On July 21, Bragg, in command of the Confederate District No. 2, ordered the Army of the Mississippi to Chattanooga, and placed Price in



else The Railroad has been torn up toward Jackson and a hard fight in which over one hundred of the enemy were killed Put up our tents and camped

Sept 3d Our camp is in an old field and the weeds are higher than a mans head and no shade Water quarter of a mile off General Crocker says this is where he wants us and here we will stay

Sept 4th Weather hot The men have been engaged all day fixing up shade around their tents digging wells sinks &c Good news from Va Rebs defeated at Manassas<sup>33</sup>. . .

Sept 7th Sunday Men have been kept on works and Picket all day Weather hot as usual Capt Cunningham has been elected Major of the Regiment Major Belknap is Lieut Col Lieut Hanks told us this evening to hold an election for Capt and 2d [Lieut.] The Knoxville men hung together and elected Hanks Capt and Wm Cathcart 2d Lieut The boys run me against Cathcart The latter received 33 votes and myself 30 Cathcart was declared *elected* I am deeply disappointed for I have had the most vexatious and laborious place in the Company and because I can do the work and others can dodge their own duties I shall be kept where I am All right some men care more for money and position than they do for the government W. T Cunningham managed the election and is better up to tricks than I am If I had made any effort to get the office I could have had it. Not over fifteen minutes was given as notice of the election Besides by the right of rank and in the regular line of promotion the place was mine. I can only quietly submit but I shall not forget

Sept 8th Weather hot and cloudy I have been in a bad humor all day caused by the knowledge of the way some of the men in this Company have acted and who pretend to be my best friends I have been slain in the house of these same friends Orders have come this evening to prepare to march.

Sept 9th Orders came late last night and I was up almost all night

command of the District of the Tennessee. *Ibid.*, 2. The excitement of this day at the Union camp near Bolivar, Tennessee, some twenty miles north of Corinth, is indicative of the prevalence of unfounded rumors; Price, at this time, was some fifty miles south of Corinth, at Tupelo, Mississippi, awaiting help from Maj.-Gen. Earl Van Dorn before moving north toward Iuka and Corinth. *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>33</sup> A premature account of victory at the Second Battle of Bull Run, which was later turned into a defeat for the Union forces. Williams, *Lincoln Finds a General*, 1:309-355.



drawing rations and seeing that the men were properly prepared for marching Lieut Hanks took me out and privately told me that he never was so disappointed in his life that I had not been elected 2d Lieut and that he was bound to have the place for me yet I cannot quite *swallow this fish* This evening there was a *mock prayer meeting* in Co "K" They sang and prayed in blasphemous mockery This work ought to be stoped by the officers — but they only *laughed*. . .

Sept 11th. . . This evening we have orders to be ready to move at daylight to-morrow morning We will perhaps go to Corinth The whole Brigade is included

*On the march in Tennessee*

Sept 12th Started early and marched south through Bolivar and back the way we came By evening we had reached the little Hatchie and on about one mile — and then countermarched back to the River and camped in an old field Had sweet potatoes for supper Many of the men *pegged out* to-day as the heat and dust was very oppressive

Sept 13th We had a hard march to-day The heat was so excessive and the dust deep. Are camped tonight on the west bank of the Tuscumbia river We found plenty of roasting ears and *Paw-paws* Genl Crocker who commands is very strict and gave command to allow no man to leave ranks for a moment unless from necessity and then his nearest man must carry his gun and other equipment until he returns Major Purcell who had charge of the rear guard captured one of our drummers who was getting some peaches and the Major tied him to a wagon and marched him along like a gov't mule until night To-night we are all very weary and will lie down on the ground and sleep soundly

Sept 14th Sunday Started on the march at break of day Company "G" in advance as guard At noon we came to the Picket line of the garrison at Corinth then we fell back to our place in the Regiment There was no water on the road from the river we left this morn and the heat was terrible Men began to drop out of the ranks and no rear guard or officer could make them keep up No water could be found When near Corinth we turned south down into an old field in a low place and *oh how hot* I was almost blind from headache and thirst Fully one half the men were *missing* Many fell from *sun stroke* and died on the ground Halted about one hour when orders came to march east of Corinth 4 miles and go into camp This we proceeded to accomplish But as the sun went down and

darkness began to come on the men kept falling out They lay like swine in the fence corners and under the bushes or behind logs or any place to rest The Regt dwindled down to a Company and almost all the officers were in ambulances or on horses. Finally we halted and but 14 men of Co "G" were left and there would have been but 13 if we had gone any farther

Sergt Gray, Dan and I lay down by a tree about as much *dead* as alive Gray giving one parting *cuss* at the officers on *horseback* We had not more than closed our weary eyes when Gray gave a whoop and yelled out to some fellow who had lain down by him — and wanted to know who he was The fellow spoke and soon as we heard his voice we knew it was a *darkey* Gray swore at him in both english and Mexican and told him to travel — and travel he did

Sept 15th Some of the men did not get up until noon to-day Hanks and Cathcart were both behind Have put up our tents. Went over to Corinth to-day. We have orders to march at day break to-morrow

*March on Iuka Mississippi*

Sept 16th Have traveled all day and toward all points of the compass and the rain has poured down all the time turning the dust all to mud. Have been in a dense forest of oak and pine most of the time We are wet to the hide and the air is very cold Went into Camp or rather bivouac about dark. We made up a fire in some old pine logs and stayed up most of the night drying our clothes and keeping warm The rain has ceased

Sept 17th Last night about 2 o'clock the rain came down again in torrents and compelled us to get up and stand by the fire the bal of the night Weather to-day cool and cloudy Have traveled all day through a country not inhabited and full of swamps We are in Alabama and tonight are camped within 2 miles of Price's Army said to be 25,000 strong at a place called Iuka. . .<sup>34</sup>

*Camp at Iuka Mississippi*

Sept 19th Started early this morning with 100 rounds each Came within sight of the Rebel pickets about 9 o'clock and formed in line of battle and with skirmishers thrown out advanced through an almost impenetrable thicket of young pines from three to ten feet high The ground was very hilly The skirmishers kept up a brisk fire and Co "A" shot one

<sup>34</sup> Iuka, Mississippi, is close to the Alabama boundary; possibly the 15th Iowa crossed the border into the latter state during their advance.

of our own Cavalrymen horse and laid the rider off on the ground We laid in line of battle all day and will sleep on our arms to-night<sup>35</sup>

Sept 20th Advanced toward Iuka this morning and entered the town at noon and found the enemy had *skedaddled* cutting his way through Rosecrans right wing and escaping to the South Where they cut through about one mile and one half from here there was a desperate contest and some of our regiments have suffered severely The 5th Iowa lost a great many men killed The large Hotel here is already full of wounded Rebs. Most of them belong to Texas regiments There are about 400 wounded here Many of them are badly hurt and say if they can only get home they will fight no more Some of them were deranged and looked horrible as they raved and rolled in their blood Some had their legs and some their arms amputated Most of them had lain on the field since the evening before The women of Iuka seemed very attentive to all their wants Saw one large Texan wounded badly and I think he would die but he was pluck to the core. I talked to him awhile He took a large minnie ball from his vest pocket and showed me The ball was flattened and he said he got that in his hip last spring at *Shiloh* from the "Yanks" and now he had another in him — but said he expected to be up again and as soon as he could he would be after us again. I said "Bully for you old boy" and bid him good bye. . .

(To be continued)

<sup>35</sup> Price had moved from the railroad south of Corinth northeast toward Iuka, some twenty miles east of Corinth, intending to join Bragg, who was racing toward the Ohio River. Buell and his Army of the Ohio were also moving toward the Ohio River, to cut off Bragg. Grant's forces were concentrated at Memphis (W. T. Sherman), Bolivar (Ord), and Corinth (Rosecrans). To save his army and protect Buell, Grant had to save Iuka. Ord, from Bolivar, was ordered to the north of Iuka; Rosecrans from Corinth moved to the south, thus hemming Price at Iuka. Both were to move on Sept. 19, Ord to the north when he heard Rosecrans' guns to the south. However, because of an adverse wind, Ord did not hear the attack commence, and thus Rosecrans bore the burden of the fighting on the 19th. When Rosecrans prepared to resume the attack on the morning of the 20th Price had withdrawn and escaped. The 15th Iowa, held in reserve under Ord, did not take part in this battle. For details of the Battle of Iuka, see Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:403-413; *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 60-137; S. H. M. Byers, *Iowa in War Times* (Des Moines, 1888), 149-58.



## HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

### *The State Historical Society of Iowa*

The Society recently requested official publications of Iowa church bodies. In response, the Rev. Fred H. Haag of Cedar Rapids sent us files of the *Iowa Synod News* and the *Minutes* of the Iowa Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church from 1940 to 1951. The Rev. Emmanuel Jasmann of Marengo gave scattered numbers of the *Minutes* of the Iowa Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States from 1917 to 1938 and the *Acts and Proceedings* of the Synod of the Mid West (Evangelical and Reformed Church), 1936 and 1937. The Society has also received valuable material from the Rev. Gene E. Phillips of Des Moines relative to the Church of the Nazarene, and from the Rev. Robert R. MacCanon of Toledo, *Minutes* of the Iowa Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, 1950 session and numerous earlier records. The Rev. Hermann W. Siefkes, president of the Iowa District of the American Lutheran Church, sent ten different minutes of the Iowa District covering the years from 1930 to 1951. In addition, he included some minutes of the old Iowa Synod that are very scarce. The Rev. Ernest A. Smith, minister of the Stuart Church of Christ, has given the Society a copy of the "History of the Stuart Church of Christ" which he compiled. Mrs. Carl Lange has sent a history of the First Presbyterian Church of Burlington, 1845-1945, written by Pastor Emeritus Archibald Cardle. Mrs. Lange also included the program of the Service of Rededication held by this church in December, 1951.

James W. Wilson of the *Carroll Daily Times Herald* has given the Society thirty-five bound volumes of the *Carroll Sentinel*, covering the years 1884-1911.

The response to the Society's request for old atlases and plat books has been most gratifying. L. W. Lovell of Monticello sent in ten different atlases and plat books from Delaware, Dubuque, Hamilton, Howard, Jones, Linn, and Shelby counties; Howard B. Helscher of Cedar Rapids donated five from Fayette, Iowa, Grundy, Johnson, and Jones counties; J. F. Traer



of Vinton sent two from Benton County; George V. Leffler of Stockport sent a 1918 atlas of Van Buren County; Hart Taylor of Waterloo provided a 1910 atlas of Black Hawk County; and Wm. A. Lawrenson of Des Moines contributed a 1914 plat book of Polk County. In response to requests for county histories, the Librarian of the Oskaloosa High School has sent us a copy of *The Past and Present of Mahaska County* by Manoah Hedge, and Charles H. Boothroyd of Chicago has sent a copy of *The History of Humbolt County*.

Dr. Kenneth F. Millsap, research associate of the Society, has resigned to accept a position as head of the Mid-America Heritage Foundation at Parsons College at Fairfield.

#### SUPERINTENDENT'S CALENDAR

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| January 5   | Attended showing of Lane K. Newberry historical paintings at Fort Madison. |
| January 12  | Showed slides of <i>Iowa</i> cruise at Des Moines.                         |
| January 16  | Lectured on <i>Iowa</i> cruise at 32 Club in Iowa City.                    |
| February 15 | Lectured on <i>Iowa</i> cruise at Masonic Luncheon Club, Iowa City.        |
| March 11    | Addressed Fortnightly Club at Washington, Iowa.                            |
| March 25    | Lectured on <i>Iowa</i> cruise to High Twelve Club in Davenport.           |
| March 27    | Addressed Iowa City Women's Club.  |
| March 27    | Addressed Ladies Night of the Gyro Club at Davenport.                      |

The following members were elected to membership in the State Historical Society during the months of January and February:

<i>Algona</i>	<i>Aurelia</i>
Mrs. Maude L. Free	Mrs. Maude Lewis
<i>Ames</i>	<i>Belle Plaine</i>
Russell Decker	Carol Cronbaugh
H. J. Weidman	<i>Bloomfield</i>
<i>Anamosa</i>	John Garrett
P. B. Daly	<i>Boone</i>
Ellsworth Tallman	Mrs. Ralph D. Jacobson
<i>Atlantic</i>	<i>Burt</i>
R. L. Finkbine	Mrs. John B. Wilson

*Castana*

Mrs. Gladys Wood

*Cedar Falls*

A. L. Ferguson

*Cedar Rapids*

Robert C. Davison

Eugene L. Emerson

Harry A. Gillette

Clarence O. Gray

Howard H. Hahn

Richard K. Jones

Dr. B. L. Knight

Mrs. Kate Terry Loomis

Clarence A. Paulson

Miss June Richtarik

Loyd R. Sherman

J. Russell Ward

Martin Wiley

*Charles City*

Mrs. Arthur E. J. Johnson

Clyde King

*Cherokee*

Charles H. D. Smith

L. A. Wallace

Donald J. Wray

*Clare*

L. E. Kuester

*Clarinda*

Mrs. W. S. Richardson

*Clinton*

Miss Corrine Forsee

Mrs. T. Wilson Gobble

Mrs. Walter B. McMahon

Charles E. Martindale

*Columbus Junction*

Mrs. Julia Hunkins

*Corning*

Glade Havens

*Council Bluffs*

Lafe H. Bond

*Crawfordsville*

Kenneth Cherryholmes

*Creston*

Miss Mary Ann Scanlan

Miss Jessie Vanzee

*Danville*

Mrs. Howard Waters

*Davenport*

James W. Dower

Earl F. Karwath

Karl E. Madden

W. J. O'Malley

Ferd G. Pfister

W. J. W. Winter

*Dayton*

Dr. F. H., Ferguson

*Delta*

Robert Reinert

Roy M. Reinert

*Denver*

Norman M. Paulson

*Des Moines*

Leonard C. Abels

Miss Vera L. Brady

Mrs. Ethel Brockett

Joseph Brody

Harold A. Casady

Mrs. Vera Dickson

Franklin Junior High School

Miss Addie L. Haglund

Frederick W. Hubbell

Iowa Press Clipping Bureau

Frederick D. Lewis

- Rev. Joseph O. Nelson  
Clifford R. Putzier  
Rev. Frederick W. Reece  
Emil Schnabel  
Mrs. T. I. Stoner  
Robert W. Swenson  
*Eddyville*  
O. H. Seifert  
*Fairfield*  
Mrs. Ambrose Peck  
*Forest City*  
P. H. Hansen  
*Fort Madison*  
Louis F. Albers  
Mrs. Theodore H. Nabers  
*Greene*  
Dr. R. F. Ladwig  
*Hull*  
Miss Emma J. Wiese  
*Humboldt*  
F. M. Henderson  
*Iowa City*  
Bruce C. Bundy  
C. W. Dack  
Francis M. Dawson  
R. A. Kuever  
Walter F. Loehwing  
*Keokuk*  
William Talbot  
*Keosauqua*  
Miss Grace E. Randell  
*Logan*  
Lloyd Foutch  
*Lone Tree*  
Shelby L. Nelson  
*Malvern*  
J. F. Wearin  
*Manchester*  
Manchester Public Library  
*Maquoketa*  
Mrs. Glenn L. Butler  
*Marengo*  
James G. Honn  
*Mason City*  
Mrs. Howard O'Leary  
Miss Evelyn Oliver  
Elmer M. Thomas  
*Mechanicsville*  
H. J. Lamont  
*Mediapolis*  
Walden T. Smith  
*Melvin*  
Mrs. Pearl Kraft  
*Mitchellville*  
A. C. Woodward  
*Morning Sun*  
Mr. Bruce Baird  
*Mount Pleasant*  
E. J. Olson  
Orlendes Ross  
A. M. Wettach  
*Mount Vernon*  
Mrs. A. B. Wallace  
*Muscatine*  
E. E. Bloom, Sr.  
Muscatine High School Library  
Miss Sybil Robshaw  
Attorney John C. Stevens  
*Newton*  
Murray Russell  
Lyle B. Tyler, Sr.  
*Oelwein*  
George D. King

*Orange City*

Jackson Hospers

*Panora*

Mrs. Gladys H. Kasner

*Perry*

Mrs. Grace Freestone

*Randalia*

V. M. Perry

*Robins*

Miles Sutura

*Rockwell City*

Miss Mary H. Morton

Mrs. Earl Westphal

*Sanborn*

Dr. Cornelius Maris

*Sergeant Bluff*

Dr. R. M. Conney

*Seymour*

Miss Susie R. Sidles

*Sheldon*

Mrs. Richard B. Monk

*Sioux City*

Dr. John L. Schott

*Springville*

Dr. H. Edw. Hanna

*Steamboat Rock*

George Potgeter

*Stockport*

Mrs. Edna Morris

Miss Ruth V. Morris

*Tama*

John T. Townsend

*Union*

Union Consolidated School

*Vinton*

C. D. Ferguson

Mrs. Vern McClurg

*Wapello*

James L. Butler

*Washington*

Mrs. Manton Hebner

Mrs. John P. Koehler

Robert Nicola

*Waterloo*

Ben G. Howrey

James Lemson

Robert G. Leo

Donald M. Lowe

*Webb*

K. K. Walker

*Wellman*

Donald C. Bissinger

Cecil Gingerich

E. C. Jones

*West Branch*

V. L. Pemberton

*West Liberty*

Anders V. Mather

*Whitten*

Whitten Consolidated School

*Wilton Junction*

J. Curtis Frymoyer

*California*

Mrs. J. E. Bergemeyer,

San Bernardino

W. N. Birdsall, Lynwood

Miss Mabel Cameron, Pasadena

Mrs. W. H. Carr, Berkeley

Richard G. Miller, Long Beach

Garfield D. Merner,

San Francisco

Miss Sara Schoonover,

San Gabriel



*Colorado*

George I. Cropley, Denver

*Idaho*

Dr. Herbert C. Mowery, Wallace

R. J. Newell, Boise

*Illinois*

Miss Emma J. Fife, Rock Falls

C. R. Golly, Peoria

R. J. Hubbard, Rockford

John W. Smith, Rockford

Charles Stuart, Cicero

Mrs. Alice R. Wickens, Chicago

Frederick E. Worth, Chicago

*Michigan*

H. Allan Barth, Lansing

*Minnesota*

Mrs. V. A. Hurlbutt, Northfield

*Mississippi*

Mrs. Fred G. Cox, Sr., Laurel

*Nebraska*

E. Clayton Ward, Omaha

*Ohio*

Mrs. Ernest V. Evans,

Cleveland Heights

*Oregon*

Miss Helen Boyd Cochrane,

Cottage Grove

*Virginia*

Burton H. Hendershott, Jr.,

Arlington

*Washington*

Miss Mame Dunnan, Everett

*Wisconsin*

T. Walter Nelson, Milton

Mrs. Dorothy R. Vacheron,

Thiensville

The following persons were elected as life members: Fred L. Ray of Davenport; Miss Grace Frank of Pleasant Valley; and Mrs. M. W. Pascoe of San Gabriel, California.

### *Iowa Historical Activities*

Old files of newspapers in two Iowa towns are being preserved on microfilm. All the Dubuque papers, dating from 1860 to 1950, have been microfilmed by a laboratory in Cleveland, Ohio. The Muscatine *Journal* will be filmed by a laboratory at Ann Arbor, Michigan. The files, now at the Public Library in Muscatine, date back 111 years. In both cases, negatives of the films will be stored by the company making them, so that duplicate copies may be made if needed.

At the Wright County Historical Society meeting on February 28, 1952, at Clarion, the new book, *The 4-H Story* by Frank Reck, was reviewed by Paul Taff, assistant youth director of the State Extension Service. President R. C. Richardson was chairman of the meeting. C. W. Sankey is treasurer of the Society, and Josephine Uhr is secretary.

The Four County Historical Society — comprising the counties of Benton, Tama, Poweshiek, and Iowa — was organized at Belle Plaine on February 29, 1952, with Robert Burrows, Sr., editor of the *Belle Plaine Union*, as temporary chairman. Permanent officers will be elected on May 2. The officers will include eight directors, two from each of the four counties.

The Guthrie County Historical Society met at Panora on January 13, 1952, and elected the following officers: Bert Culver, chairman; Jessie Batschelet, vice-chairman; Gladys Kasner, secretary-treasurer. Another meeting was held at Panora on February 10, and the members listened to an address by Mrs. John Crabb of Jamaica on "Conserving our Natural and Historic Resources." At the March 9 meeting, members brought old snapshots or photographs of historic places or people of the county. Featured speakers at this meeting were Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Robinson of Bayard.

Centennials of Iowa towns are still the order of the day. Glenwood will celebrate 100 years on July 27-29, 1952; Grundy Center will hold a Diamond Jubilee Celebration on June 10-11, to mark the 75th year of the incorporation of the town; Earlville will be 100 years old in 1952; Cedar Falls will celebrate 100 years on July 3-4.

The Board of the Henry County Historical Society met at Mount Pleasant, January 16, 1952. Members of the Board are: George Van Allen, H. E. Elgar, C. S. Rogers, George Johnson, H. L. Shook, George Crane, Dr. F. M. Edwards, and Hattie B. Leach, secretary. The Board acknowledged receipt of many historical relics to be added to the collections of the Society.

The 110th birthday of Iowa Wesleyan College was observed on February 15, 1952. Wartburg College commemorated 100 years of existence on February 19.

Tentative plans are being made for the celebration of Marshalltown's centennial in 1953. Westin Jacobson is chairman of the committee. Among the plans is the preparation of a history of Marshalltown's first 100 years.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Harrison John Thornton is professor of history at the State University of Iowa.

Merrill E. Jarchow is dean of men at Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota.

Mildred Throne is associate editor of the State Historical Society of Iowa.

# THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

ESTABLISHED BY LAW IN THE YEAR 1857

INCORPORATED: 1867, 1892, AND 1942

LOCATED AT IOWA CITY IOWA

---

## EXECUTIVE

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN.....SUPERINTENDENT

## OFFICERS

S. T. MORRISON.....PRESIDENT

NORMAN B. SHAFFER.....TREASURER

## BOARD OF CURATORS

### *Elected by the Society*

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## COVER

Steamboats at the levee at St. Louis in 1855. The picture is from an old daguerreotype.

## THE KEOKUK PACKET COMPANY

*By William J. Petersen*

Business was looking up at St. Louis in the early forties. That, at least, was the firm contention of the energetic John S. McCune as he began urging his fellow citizens to establish a regular line of packets between St. Louis and Keokuk. But most businessmen balked at McCune's rash plan, believing that the country was not populated densely enough to support such a venture. Even McCune's best friends "distrusted the feasibility of the scheme and feared the results."

John S. McCune was no idle dreamer. He was a man of vision, strong in body, keen of mind, and endowed with boundless enthusiasm and a tremendous capacity for work. Born in Bourbon County, Kentucky, on June 21, 1809, McCune had moved to Pike County, Missouri, with his parents in 1817. Near Bowling Green his father staked out a claim and began raising fine blooded stock on his farm. An energetic pioneer of the old school, the elder McCune had acquainted his son at a tender age with the "healthful and useful pursuit of agriculture."

At the age of thirty John McCune went to Galena to arrange for the distribution of government supplies to Upper Mississippi posts. Returning to Pike County, he erected a flour mill on the banks of the Mississippi at the town of Louisiana. He soon became dissatisfied with this venture, however, sold his establishment and hastened to St. Louis and associated himself with Samuel Gaty in a prosperous iron foundry. He demonstrated his enterprise by proposing the Keokuk Packet Company after residing scarcely a year in the flourishing river port.<sup>1</sup>

Despite "gloomy predictions," McCune launched forth on an undertaking whose daring conception had "startled" some of the most venturesome spirits in St. Louis. Fortunately he had the hearty support of Sam Gaty, whose German ancestors had settled in Pennsylvania before the Revolution and founded the town of Gettysburg. Samuel Gaty was born in Kentucky in 1811. The original name was Getty, but Sam's Kentucky teacher — he had

<sup>1</sup> Richard Edwards and M. Hopewell, *Edwards's Great West . . .* (St. Louis, 1860), 551-2.



only seven months' schooling — wrote and pronounced it "Gaty," and it was not until years later that Sam learned of the mistake. When he was ten years old the youthful Samuel was apprenticed in a Louisville foundry, and in 1828 came to St. Louis. During the winter of 1830-1831 he built a foundry and on July 4, 1831, made his first castings for Captain John C. Swon's steamboat, the *Carrolton*.

When John McCune joined the firm, Gaty already had the reputation of making the first casting in St. Louis and the first engine west of the Mississippi. He also had aided in building the *Eagle*, the first steamboat built at St. Louis and used during the thirties in the Alton trade. The foundry proved a bonanza for both, being assessed at \$171,000 in 1851, and the partnership was not dissolved until 1862. Meanwhile, in 1843, Gaty lent strong financial aid to McCune's upriver project. In addition he built some of the finest steamboats that ever "walked the water" for the line. One of the best known craft to ply between St. Louis and Keokuk was named in honor of the colorful Sam Gaty.<sup>2</sup>

McCune and Gaty quickly placed a boat on the stocks at St. Louis, and in May, 1844, the steamboat *Die Vernon* was ready to inaugurate the first regular upriver trade to Keokuk. Built at a cost of \$16,000 and owned by John S. McCune, Sam Gaty, Charles Dean, Sam Shepperd, and Captain Neil Cameron, the *Die Vernon* was 161 feet long, 25½ feet in breadth, 5 feet 5 inches in depth, and measured 211 tons. She was a single-engined sidewheeler with a plain figure. The *Die Vernon* plied between St. Louis and Keokuk for six seasons, burning at the St. Louis levee during the winter of 1849-1850. Captain Cameron commanded her during her first season.<sup>3</sup>

From this small beginning grew the Keokuk Packet Company, the pioneer as well as the longest lived of all the great packet companies. In 1845 two boats were added: the *La Clede* and the *Boreas*. The *La Clede* was a 239 ton craft that was completed at St. Louis in the spring of 1845. She was 197 feet long, 25 feet beam, and 5 feet hold, and was owned by Captain Cameron, John S. McCune, and seven others. The *La Clede* burned at the

<sup>2</sup> J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County . . .* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1883), 1:666-8; *Edwards's Great West . . .*, 101-105.

<sup>3</sup> *Edwards's Great West . . .*, 551-2; Scharf, *History of Saint Louis . . .*, 2:1115. Enrolment No. 56, May 23, 1844, Collector of Customs Office, St. Louis; George B. Merrick "Steamboats and Steamboatmen of the Upper Mississippi," *Burlington Post*, Aug. 15, 1914.

St. Louis levee on August 9, 1848.<sup>4</sup> Clearly, the Keokuk Packet Company evolved out of much the same ownership which had marked the earliest steamboats on the Upper Mississippi.

Not content with two vessels, they purchased the *Boreas*<sup>5</sup> from Captains Thomas M. Fifthian and George Barnard. The company also secured the contract for carrying the United States mail, and a daily service was successfully maintained.

The three boats fared so well that an opposition line was formed in 1845 composed of the *Swallow*, the *Anthony Wayne*, and the *Edward Bates*. Cutthroat competition was the order of the day and it was not until mid-summer, and only after a bitter fight, that the McCune boats were able to force their exhausted opponents to withdraw from the Keokuk trade. Soon afterwards the *Edward Bates* was added to the Keokuk line.

The history of the *Edward Bates* was as dramatic as it was short. On August 9, 1848, while bound upstream with a large number of cabin and deck passengers, she collapsed a flue near Hamburg, Illinois, causing the death of fifty-three persons and scalding more than two score others. The deck crew and firemen, together with the unfortunate deck passengers, suffered the greatest casualties. Thirteen dead bodies were picked up at Hamburg after the accident. The explosion of the *Edward Bates* was one of the worst marine disasters on the Upper Mississippi. But the end was not yet: the ill-fated craft was burned the following year in the great St. Louis fire of 1849 with a loss of \$22,500 to her owners.<sup>6</sup> Twenty-two other boats were destroyed in this gigantic conflagration.

<sup>4</sup> Scharf, *History of Saint Louis* . . . , 2:1115; Enrolment No. 19, March 11, 1845, Collector of Customs, St. Louis; Merrick, "Steamboats and Steamboatmen of the Upper Mississippi," *Burlington Post*, Jan. 27, 1917.

<sup>5</sup> Scharf, *History of Saint Louis* . . . , 2:1114; Enrolment No. 27, 42, March 28, April 10, 1845, and No. 56, April 18, 1849, Collector of Customs, St. Louis; Merrick, "Steamboats and Steamboatmen of the Upper Mississippi," *Burlington Post*, Jan. 3, 1914. Merrick believes there was only one *Boreas* but actually there were three and all owned by the same men: George Barnard and Thomas M. Fifthian. The first was built at Pittsburgh in 1841 and measured 156 tons; *Boreas* No. 2 was constructed at the same city in 1845 and displaced 222 tons; *Boreas* No. 3 was launched at Elizabethtown in 1847, measured 249 tons, and was captained by James Barnard. Chittenden mentions the loss of the *Boreas* on the Missouri River in 1846, and the writer is inclined to believe that it was the *Boreas* No. 2 that served the Keokuk line since she was new and Scharf states that she was built elsewhere for St. Louis owners.

<sup>6</sup> *Burlington Post*, Nov. 28, 1914; *North Western Gazette and Galena Advertiser*, Aug. 15, 1848; James T. Lloyd, *Lloyd's Steamboat Directory* . . . (Cincinnati, 1856), 175, 263-4.

By 1846 McCune's wisdom in establishing a daily line of packets on this easy 183-mile run was apparent. There were no rapids to cross, and boats in the Keokuk trade could be uniformly of a greater tonnage than those plying farther upstream. Thus, the *Die Vernon*, the *La Clede*, and the *Boreas* had a far greater average tonnage than the boats engaged in the lead traffic. Since they carried a heavier passenger trade and were less concerned with freight, they were more luxurious and costly. A decade later, when passenger traffic had increased above the Des Moines Rapids, the boats in this trade also became more beautiful and expensive. By this time the model hull had reached a point in design whereby a boat of well-nigh twice the tonnage of those of the forties drew no more water.

Within two years after McCune founded the line, newspaper editors were referring to the Keokuk Packet Company in familiar and friendly terms. On January 1, 1846, the *St. Louis Daily New Era* declared:

The old and excellent line of packets between this and Keokuk are about to resume their trips. The *Boreas* started up last evening. The *Die Vernon* is lying at the wharf painting and receiving repairs; she will resume her place as soon as the work is done. The queen of the trio, the *La Clede*, has gone to New Orleans, but is by this time on her way up, and as soon as she arrives the daily line will commence; enterprise and determination of the company to afford every accommodation and convenience to the citizens of the Upper Mississippi should entitle them to an increase of business. Their respective days of departure, and other arrangements, may be seen by reference to an advertisement in another column.

The first appearance of this advertisement in the spring of 1846 serves as an index to the steamboats, their captains, their schedules, and the chief ports at which they docked. The *St. Louis Daily New Era* proudly referred to the company as the "U. S. Mail Daily Line of Packets" operating the *Die Vernon*, the *Boreas*, and the *La Clede* from St. Louis to Clarksville, Louisiana, Hannibal, Marion City, Quincy, LaGrange, Tully, Alexandria, Warsaw, and Keokuk, touching at all intermediate landings between these towns. The following schedule prevailed:

STEAMBOAT	CAPTAIN	TIME OF DEPARTURE FROM ST. LOUIS
<i>Die Vernon</i>	Charles Dean	Monday and Thursday at 5 p.m.
<i>Boreas</i>	James Whitney, jr.	Tuesday and Friday at 5 p.m.
<i>La Clede</i>	W. S. Randolph	Wednesday & Saturday at 5 p.m.



The return from Keokuk to St. Louis followed much the same pattern. The *Die Vernon* left Keokuk on Tuesday and Friday evenings at five o'clock; the *Boreas* departed on Wednesday and Saturday at the same hour; and the *La Clede* set out on Thursdays and Sundays at five. The public was instructed to apply for passage on board the boats.

Prior to the Civil War no other single factor was as important as the Keokuk Packet Company in building up the country between St. Louis and Keokuk. Iowa was admitted into the Union on December 28, 1846, and the number of immigrants bound for the Hawkeye State steadily mounted until by the mid-fifties it had reached torrential proportions. Meanwhile, eastern Missouri and western and northern Illinois were also forging ahead. Throughout this process the Keokuk Packets enjoyed a considerable patronage from Alton. Passengers bound for some point on the Illinois River could transfer at Grafton to an Illinois river boat. Two flourishing cities, Hannibal and Quincy, offered a rich patronage, Quincy alone enjoying such a phenomenal prosperity that it became necessary later to establish a special "Quincy" line which connected with a short-run boat plying between the "Gem City" and Keokuk. By 1860 Quincy could boast 13,718 inhabitants and in 1870 this number had leaped to 24,052. Meanwhile Springfield, Illinois, could count only 9,320 and 17,364 in each of these years.<sup>7</sup>

After a slow start, Keokuk, the northern terminus of the line, sprouted during the fifties and was one of the most important Iowa cities at the opening of the Civil War. "Perhaps some of you never heard of that place with the queer Indian name," declared a St. Louis lecturer to a large Philadelphia audience in 1856:

Ten years ago last May I first saw it. A row of wooden houses under the bluff was the "city" then. The steamboat men called it "Rat Row." Now, Keokuk is built back a mile on the bluff, has 10,000 people, is lighted with gas, has two or three daily papers, is improving the navigation of the Des Moines river, to Ft. Des Moines, away there in the heart of Iowa, and is also building a railroad to the same point. She has a daily line of magnificent steam packets to St. Louis, and has an immense trade with the interior, in the Des Moines Valley.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> William J. Petersen, "The Lead Traffic on the Upper Mississippi, 1823-1848," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 17:81-2 (June, 1930); E. W. Gould, *Fifty Years on the Mississippi . . .* (St. Louis, 1889), 513-14; Henry C. Hubbart, *The Older Middle West, 1840-1880 . . .* (New York, 1936), 261.

<sup>8</sup> Keokuk *Daily Gate City*, March 14, 1856.



After such a eulogy a local editor might be pardoned for querying: "Isn't Keokuk worth looking after?" For the self-styled "Porkopolis of Iowa" had indeed become the entrepot for the Des Moines Valley as hordes of settlers pushed up the Des Moines River. For a number of years light draft boats had enjoyed a profitable trade between Keokuk and the mushroom Des Moines River towns. On one occasion in 1852 the company sent the 485-ton *Jeannie Deans* up the Des Moines, but her captain, fearing she would be caught by a falling river, sought the widest spot near Croton and hurried back. In 1859 the steamboat *Charles Rodgers* actually made the run from Keokuk to Fort Dodge, and a grand celebration was held in the straggling frontier village in honor of the first steamboat to reach that point. The building of the railroad up the Des Moines Valley during the early sixties quickly snuffed out this trade, and the iron horse henceforth carried the freight deposited on the Keokuk levee by the McCune packets.<sup>9</sup>

Far more important to Keokuk and the Keokuk Packet Company was the traffic destined for such points as Fort Madison, Burlington, Muscatine, Davenport, Clinton, Galena, Dubuque, and smaller towns as far distant as St. Paul in the North Star State. Since the beginnings of steamboating a profitable transfer business was enjoyed between Keokuk and Montrose during low water. Special rapids pilots also took the big boats back and forth across the Des Moines Rapids. Fortunate it was for the Gate City of Iowa that John McCune and his partners chose Keokuk as the terminus for their line and actually named the packet company in its honor.

It is not strange, therefore, that in the years that followed the admission of Iowa into the Union the importance of the Keokuk Packet Company should steadily increase. Two boats were added to the line in 1847. The *Lucy Bertram*, a 268-ton sidewheeler, was launched at St. Louis early in the spring with Charles Dean as her master. In September the *Kate Kearney* splashed into the Mississippi, being the largest craft McCune had yet brought out. She was 199 feet long, 30 feet in breadth, 5 feet 4 inches in depth, and of 304 tons burden.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> C. F. Davis, "The Voyage of the First Steamboat from Keokuk to Fort Dodge," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 7:141-2 (July, 1905); Tacitus Hussey, "History of Steamboating on the Des Moines River, from 1837 to 1862," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 4:323-82 (April, 1900); *Burlington Post*, Aug. 12, 1916; W. J. Petersen, *Iowa: The Rivers of Her Valleys* (Iowa City, 1941), 177-205.

<sup>10</sup> Enrolment No. 18, March 3, 1847; No. 192, Sept. 10, 1847, Collector of Customs, St. Louis; *Burlington Post*, Dec. 23, 1916. The *Lucy Bertram* was launched at

Although McCune's packet company was now in its fourth season it apparently was still considered a pooling agreement, for the ownership of the various boats was still vested in different individuals and firms. For example, McCune and the firm of Anderson & Conn had an interest in the *Lucy Bertram* and the *Kate Kearney*, but the other owners differed in the case of each boat.

Ill fortune haunted the *Kate Kearney*. As she lay at the Canton levee in 1850 several flues collapsed and a number of people were killed or scalded. The shell of the boiler remained, however, and a new bank of flues was inserted. Two years later the *Kate Kearney* was declared unfit for service and was laid up. When two boats in the Alton line sank in 1854 the *Kate Kearney* was brought out to take care of one of the runs. On February 14, 1854, the last bell had ceased ringing and the *Kate Kearney* was preparing to pull out from the St. Louis levee when a terrific explosion reduced the boat to a "confused heap of ruins." There were fifty or sixty passengers aboard and many names, as usual, were not yet registered. Several unknown passengers were blown overboard and lost. Fifteen badly scalded persons, groaning and screaming, were rushed to a hospital where a number died within a few hours.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, twice-a-week service between St. Louis and Galena began in 1847 when the steamboat *Kentucky*, Alexander Montgomery, master, advertised a combination with the *Lucy Bertram* and the *Anthony Wayne*. The *Kentucky* expected to leave the head of the rapids every Saturday and Wednesday morning at eleven, or immediately after the arrival of the Keokuk Packets. Captain Montgomery assured passengers they would be towed by horses over the rapids in a comfortable packet and that the *Kentucky* would convey them in "much shorter time than usual" to Galena. Punctual service and fair rates were guaranteed.<sup>12</sup>

A distinguishing feature of the Keokuk Packet Company was its uniformly quick and certain service. This was in sharp contrast to most other boats running on the Upper Mississippi. A veteran river man, Captain E. W. Gould, was particularly impressed by the clocklike schedule maintained by the McCune boats:

St. Louis in 1847. She was owned by McCune, James E. Yeatman, Anderson and Conn, and John H. Boween. She was 198 feet long, 28 feet broad, and 5 feet in depth.

<sup>11</sup> *Lloyd's Steamboat Directory* . . ., 244-5.

<sup>12</sup> *North Western Gazette and Galena Advertiser*, Sept. 17, 1847.

The regularity and promptness with which it started from port and made its trips, soon became known, and was so satisfactory to the public and its patrons, and was such an improvement over the usual custom, of delaying departure for hours after the advertised time, and sometimes for days, that it grew rapidly into favor, and its patronage was unprecedented, and probably did more to advance the commercial interest of St. Louis, and for the settlement of the country bordering on that portion through which it ran, than all other causes combined.<sup>13</sup>

Balmy days were generally followed by rough weather. Jealous of the lush returns of the Keokuk Packets, rival groups frequently stepped in to enjoy a part of the trade. Their appearance always started cutthroat competition and it was fortunate the line was composed of a group of officers and owners willing to stake their all to whip the opposition. The men who comprised the packet company are said to have ranked among the most capable on the entire Mississippi. They were fighters, too, who were not easily frightened by an adversary.

One of the most bitter wars occurred in the spring of 1850 when the *Monongahela*, the *New England*, and the *Mary Stephens* formed an opposition line to the Keokuk Packets and fiercely contended for the river trade. Every week day evening a boat from each line left St. Louis side by side, carrying freight and passengers at ruinous prices and sparing no expense for fuel or food. It was a nip and tuck race for each port with the winner usually gaining the lion's share of the trade. The opposition had excellent boats and apparently fat pocketbooks, for the fight was a severe one. Spurred on by the dynamic brain and energy of John McCune the officers and owners proved equal to the emergency. After the two companies had sustained a loss of some fifty thousand dollars, the opposition line finally withdrew and their boats were sold at auction. The *New England* was added to the Keokuk Packet Company. By some curious twist of fate the new boat met the same fate as the *Edward Bates* when purchased from a rival line. The *New England* burned at the St. Louis levee on January 18, 1853.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Gould, *Fifty Years on the Mississippi* . . . , 514.

<sup>14</sup>Scharf, *History of Saint Louis* . . . , 2:1115; *Burlington Post*, April 28, Nov. 24, Dec. 22, 1917. *Monongahela* enrolled May 2, 1850, at Collector of Customs Office in St. Louis. She was built at Pittsburgh in 1845 and was owned and captained by Spencer J. Ball of Clarkesville, Missouri. The *Monongahela* was 200 feet long, 24½ foot beam, and 5 feet hold, and measured 238 tons.



The slim bands that had held McCune's boats in mutual association for almost a decade were firmly riveted together on January 22, 1853, when the Keokuk Packet Company was incorporated under the laws of Illinois. Apparently such a plan had been under way for some time, for on March 13, 1852, John S. McCune enrolled the *New England No. 2*, the *Glaucus*, and the second *Die Vernon* at the Collector of Customs at St. Louis and named the Keokuk Packet Company as their owners. The new *Die Vernon* was among the most celebrated boats on the Upper Mississippi. Built at St. Louis in 1850, this magnificent craft was 255 feet long, 31.2 feet wide, 5.9 feet hold, and was 445 tons burden. She cost \$49,000, a sum which at the time was considered "very large" for an upriver boat. She was commanded by M. Langhorne, but in 1853 Rufus Ford captained her in her great race against the *West Newton* to St. Paul. She was the pride of the Keokuk Packet Company and one of the fastest boats that ever turned a wheel on the Upper Mississippi.<sup>15</sup>

It was about this time that the Keokuk Packet Company entered its golden age of steamboating. A feature in its history at this time is the longevity of the new boats entering the line compared with the short life of those constructed during the forties. Measured from the point of design, size, appointments, and durability, the boats built for western waters reached their greatest perfection between about 1855 and 1875. And the Keokuk Packets, while averaging somewhat smaller than the boats on the Lower Mississippi and the Ohio, were generally much larger than those plying the Illinois, the Missouri, and the Mississippi above Keokuk. The superiority of these boats is attested by the ease with which the second *Die Vernon* beat the sleek *West Newton* in 1853.<sup>16</sup>

The mighty flood of settlers pouring into Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa afforded a rich harvest to the stockholders. Despite incessant competition,

<sup>15</sup> The *New England No. 2*, the *Die Vernon*, and the *Glaucus* were entered on the books of the Collector of Customs at St. Louis on March 13, 1852, under enrolment numbers 29, 30, 31. The *New England No. 2* was apparently the old *New England* rebuilt, for her enrolment indicates she was built at Shousetown, Pennsylvania, in 1847. She was 213 feet long, 27 feet 2 inches beam, 5 feet 5 inches hold, measured 306 tons, and was commanded by Rufus Ford at the time of her enrolment. The *Glaucus*, a sternwheeler, was built at West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, in 1849. She was commanded by Nathan P. Hubbard and was 153 feet long, 25½ feet in breadth, and 4 feet 2 inches in depth, measuring 154 tons.

<sup>16</sup> A study of the tonnage, speed, cost, and length of service of the boats built during this period would seem to warrant this general conclusion.



explosions, fire, snags, sandbars, and the advent of the railroad, the company was so well managed that its popularity continued to increase. According to Captain Gould its stock was considered "the best in the market" and for a number of years very little of it was for sale.<sup>17</sup>

Heretofore the Keokuk Packet Company had confined its activities to the region between St. Louis and Keokuk, making only such connections above the Des Moines Rapids as would redound to its own advantage. Up to 1850 it had successfully beaten off competitors who dared parallel its run although scores of boats were churning up and down between St. Louis and the lead region. After 1850 the company frequently carried on rate wars with the enemy. Sometimes these grew out of an effort to pick up a little excess profit, when the traffic was light in the regular run, sometimes in retaliation against a competing line that had dared to enter as a regular in forbidden territory.

Naturally their competitors and often the press resented these incursions. When the St. Louis and Keokuk Packet extended their line to Galena in 1852 it met a hostile and bitter reception by the local press. Commenting on the arrival of the *New England*, the *Galena Jeffersonian* feigned to be "much pained to know that her freight was exceedingly light. She left on Tuesday morning, with as large a load as she brought. Though the business done by this line thus far has not, in our opinion, been very extensive, we are convinced that if the proprietors will only persevere, they will succeed—in losing as much money as they can conveniently spare." A St. Paul editor, on the other hand, felt it was a "mistake" for the company not to come all the way through and promised a "fair share" of the business on hand.<sup>18</sup>

Thriving steamboat corporations were seldom greatly concerned over local editorial chastisement. Even though traffic had not been increasing it is probable that the installation of a line by the Northern Cross Railroad to connect Quincy with Keokuk would have brought some reply by the McCune boats. At any rate when the *G. W. Sparhawk* began plying between those two points late in 1855, the Keokuk Packet was ready to meet it the following spring. Early in March the "old and popular" Keokuk Packet Company advertised two daily lines of steamboats between Keokuk

<sup>17</sup> Gould, *Fifty Years on the Mississippi* . . . , 514.

<sup>18</sup> St. Paul *Minnesota Pioneer*, June 3, 1852, quoting and commenting upon the *Galena Jeffersonian*.

and St. Louis. The "staunch and speedy" steamboats *Westerner*, *Keokuk*, *Sam Gaty*, and *Quincy* (2) were to leave Keokuk daily at 6 A. M., Quincy at 9 A. M., and arrive at St. Louis at 5 o'clock the next morning. In addition, to prevent the *Sparhawk* from encroaching too much, the *Ben Campbell* was to leave Keokuk daily at 2 in the afternoon and connect at Quincy at 5 P. M. with the St. Louis packets *Jeannie Deans* and *Die Vernon*. The company believed the names of these boats were alone "sufficient guarantee of their speed and accommodation."<sup>19</sup>

The support of Keokuk citizens was quickly thrown behind such boats as the *Ben Campbell*, a handsome 267-ton sidewheeler which had been built at Shousetown, Pennsylvania, in 1852, and named for the senior member of the firm of B. H. Campbell & Co., wholesale grocers of Galena. Originally designed for the Minnesota trade, the *Ben Campbell* had too much depth for that trade. Accordingly, in the fall of 1852, she was sold to the Keokuk Packet Company. Four years later, in the spring of 1856, a Keokuk editor recorded a trip on the sleek *Ben Campbell*:

We went down to Quincy on Wednesday, on the *Ben Campbell*, returning yesterday. It was the intention of a number of our citizens to have made a May party to our sister city, but the weather was so unpropitious in the morning that but few set out. — However, with the Brass Band aboard, the trip was pleasant enough, and we conclude that some of them enjoyed themselves pretty well, else we don't know why they should have set up so late encouraging a band of fiddlers and kicking around the floor, while we were trying to coax a little sleep to visit our eyelids. Capt. Heaight did everything to render the trip agreeable, and that the day was not as shiny and soft as we would have had it, was not his fault. But we had a beautiful day to return in, and perhaps enjoyed that the more on account of the rough day preceding it.

The river is gradually spreading out over its banks, and large bodies of bottom land are overflowed for the first time since the great flood of 1851. And still the river is rising, and the prospects of damage are greater than many interested parties can contemplate with much gratification.

Quincy is improving her streets somewhat, but we saw very little building, at least compared with what we are accustomed to see at home. The improvements that have been made in this respect we conclude to be in the southern part of the city, where we did not go, though we scoured over the rest of the town pretty

<sup>19</sup> Keokuk *Daily Gate City*, Dec. 4, 1855, March 8, 14, 1856.

thoroughly. Quincy is a fine town, and we are always pleased with it, but there is not the rapid improvement and heavy, driving business that we see at home, her railroads, age, and extended reputation notwithstanding. But whoever wants to take a pleasant trip to a pleasant town, we would recommend to go down to Quincy on the *Ben Campbell*, under the auspices of Capt. Heaight, and his obliging Clerk, friend Hoey.<sup>20</sup>

The opening of navigation was always hailed with delight. On April 2, 1856, the *Keokuk Daily Gate City* declared:

Navigation being fully opened, business has taken a new start, and all hands are full of life and activity. The Levee is crowded with plunder, teams, drays and men. The wholesale grocers are receiving large supplies of everything in their line. The stocks of dry goods are still behind hand. We will give due notice of their arrival.

The following day, April 3, the *Gate City* recorded the arrival of the *Westerner*:

The *Westerner* came in at 1 o'clock Wednesday morning, with one of the largest loads ever brought to this city. In addition to the manifest as published in this paper, she had a large number of passengers, and 22 families of immigrants with large lots of plunder, about 20 head of horses, 10 head of cattle, 3 imported dogs, and a lot of superior pigs.

The manifest of the *Westerner* is well worth studying, for it reveals the widespread needs of bustling Keokuk.

St. Louis — per *Westerner* — R H Stephens 5 pkgs; Stafford and McCune, 10 bbls whisky; Hamill and Co, 10 bbls flour; Connable, Smith and Co, 267 pkgs; Burns and Rentgen, 20 pkgs coffee, sugar and sunds; McGavie, Chittenden and Co, 115 bars iron, 187 bbls do, 16 pkgs; P Hart, 3 bbls ale; S S Vail and Co, 10 pkgs machinery; H W Drake, 62 sks d apples; Newton and Spelman, 20 pkgs; Bruce and Daniels, 23 bags d salt; Patterson and Co, 49 empty casks; B F Moody, 91 cases boots and shoes; Kramer, Irvin and Co, 8 pkgs furniture; Beatty, Long and Co, 5 pkgs machinery; J Fry, 31 pkgs; T I McKenny, 7 pkgs drugs; Carter and Co, 32 cases boots and shoes; James Crane, 5 bbls vinegar; Krayner and Schrick, 9 pkgs; A P Thomas and Co, 1 bbl mdze; Connable, Smyth and Co, 50 bxs candy; Kilbourne and

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, May 9, 1856.

Davis, 3 bxs fire brick; C Garber and Co, 2 bxs mdze; J. Mount, 48 pkgs mdze.

Between April 4 and 19 the *Gate City* recorded the arrival of steamboats at the Port of Keokuk, noting whence they came and whither they were bound.

## PORT OF KEOKUK

<i>Date</i>	<i>Steamboat</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>Bound For</i>
April 4th.	Alice, Jeannie Deans,	Keosauqua, St. Louis,	Des Moines River St. Louis
April 5th.	Die Vernon, Sam Gaty, Laclede, Badger State, Ben Campbell,	St. Louis, St. Louis, Rock Island, St. Louis, Quincy,	St. Louis St. Louis St. Louis Davenport Quincy
April 6th.	Audubon, Westerner, Montauk, Metropolitan, York State,	Davenport, St. Louis, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Davenport,	St. Louis St. Louis Davenport St. Paul St. Louis
April 7th.	Keokuk, Jenny Lind, Dan Converse,	St. Louis, St. Louis, Davenport,	St. Louis Burlington St. Louis
April 8th.	Ben Campbell, Cambridge, John Bell,	Quincy, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati,	Quincy St. Louis St. Louis
April 12th.	Sam Gaty, Laclede, James Lyon, Addia, Forest Rose, Eunice, York State, Fanny Harris, A G Mason, Ben Campbell,	St. Louis, St. Louis, Wheeling, Zanesville, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, St. Louis, St. Louis, Quincy,	St. Louis      Dubuque Dubuque Dubuque Quincy
April 13th.	Dubuque, Montauk, Audubon, Conewago, Grace Darling, Ben Campbell,	Davenport, Davenport, St. Louis, St. Louis, St. Louis, Quincy,	St. Louis St. Louis St. Paul St. Louis St. Paul Quincy



April 14th.	Henry Graff,	St. Louis,	Galena
	Minnesota Belle,	St. Louis,	Galena
	Metropolitan,	Galena,	St. Paul
	Golden State,	St. Louis,	Dubuque
	Brazil,	St. Louis,	Dubuque
	Yuba,	St. Louis,	St. Louis
April 15th.	Mattie Wayne,	St. Louis,	St. Paul
	Ben Campbell,	Quincy,	Quincy
	Envoy,	St. Louis,	St. Paul
April 16th.	Alice,	Davenport,	D M River
	Ben Campbell,	Quincy,	Quincy
	Laclede,	Davenport,	St. Louis
	Keokuk,	St. Louis,	St. Louis
	Michigan,	Eddyville,	
	Dan Converse,	St. Louis,	
April 17th.	Louisville,	St. Louis,	
	Adelia,	Davenport,	St. Louis
	Oakland	Davenport,	St. Louis
	Sam Gaty	St. Louis,	St. Louis
	Ben Campbell,	Quincy,	Quincy
	Wave,	St. Louis,	Davenport

An analysis of these arrivals shows that 15 of the 55 arrivals recorded were Keokuk Packet Company boats — the *Ben Campbell*, *Die Vernon*, *Jeannie Deans*, *Keokuk*, *Sam Gaty*, and *Westerner*. The *Quincy*, a new boat in the line for 1856, had not put in its appearance by April 17. Of the 55 arrivals recorded, 28 were from St. Louis, 11 from the Upper Mississippi, 7 from Quincy, 6 from the Ohio, and 2 from the Des Moines. The Keokuk Packet Company was playing a dynamic role in the commercial development of Keokuk.

The closing of navigation was always viewed with regret by river towns. This was just as true at Keokuk as at Dubuque, even though the Gate City of Iowa had the advantage of a longer season of navigation — both at the opening and closing of the Mississippi. On December 5, 1855, the *Daily Gate City* noted: "About 32 inches reported on the rapids. Boats still go up occasionally. River falling slowly, with six feet in the channel to St. Louis, making a good navigable stage. Weather delightful; indeed an enthusiast might say it was glorious — if not 'perfectly g-e-lorious.'" Freight rates were remarkably low for the season — being 12½ to 15 cents per 100 pounds.

But the pleasant fall weather had changed by December 7 to rains followed by a "hard freeze" on December 9. On December 11 the *Daily Gate City* reported that the St. Louis packet, which was due on Sunday night, had been detained by "high winds and stress of weather," and did not get into Keokuk until Monday afternoon. The weather was cold and clear, roads hard, and streets lively with teams and drays. The following day the editor reported the river was still free from ice with a good stage of water to St. Louis, but the Keokuk Packet Company did not miss such opportunities to carry freight. On December 14 the *Gate City* recorded: "The *Die Vernon* came in yesterday half a day or so behind time, having been detained by fog, and by the delivery of 500 tons of freight all along up the river." After another cold spell the weather moderated considerably, but ice was running "thick and fast" in the Mississippi. This did not prevent the *Die Vernon* from coming into port again on Tuesday, December 18, and the editor learned that the packets would continue to run as long as there was a chance to get through. Two days later the *G. W. Sparhawk* and another steamboat arrived in port. Immediately thereafter the cold weather clamped down on Keokuk in earnest, and no further arrivals were recorded in 1855.

In 1857 the freight and passenger line between St. Louis and Quincy was comprised of the *Keokuk*, the *Sam Gaty*, and the *Quincy*. The mail and passenger line to Keokuk was made up of the *Jeannie Deans*, J. W. Malin, master; the *Die Vernon*, Sheble, master; and the *Thos. Swann*, in command of J. H. Johnson. In addition to the boats already mentioned, the *New Lucy*, the *Prairie State*, the *Regulator*, the *Jennie Lind*, the *Conewago*, the *Winchester*, the *York State*, and a number of others plied in the McCune Line.<sup>21</sup>

On April 16, 1863, the Keokuk Packet Company was reincorporated according to the laws of the state of Illinois. The Civil War, like the railroad and competition, left its scars, but the company continued strong, plying between St. Louis and Keokuk and engaging in occasional forays elsewhere. For a half dozen years following the Civil War McCune found himself caught in the vortex of the struggle that had been brewing between the

<sup>21</sup> *Muscatine Journal*, May 25, 1857. According to the *Journal*, one-half of the stock of the company was owned in St. Louis and the other half distributed at various points along the line. Some five hundred persons were employed by the company during ten months of the year, and the boats were run at an annual expense of \$592,000. Only one accident had occurred since the line was organized.

Northern Line of St. Louis and the White Collar Line of William F. Davidson. The Keokuk Packet Company managed to weather this storm until 1873 when suddenly a union of steamboat corporations was consummated which changed the history of the line as well as that of Upper Mississippi steamboating.<sup>22</sup>

Early in the spring of 1873, while the directors of the Keokuk Packet Company were confronted with the problem of renewing their articles of incorporation, a meeting of the captains and officers of three great packet companies was called in St. Louis. Intense railroad competition combined with a desire to eliminate the devastating competition that must ultimately ruin all river men led to a new steamboat combination under the title Keokuk Northern Line Packet Company. This was a combination of the White Collar Line and the Northern Line of St. Louis with the Keokuk Packet Company.

The two old St. Louis Lines gave their names to the new organization. But the Keokuk Packet Company gave more. The newly organized company wisely chose as its president John S. McCune. In making this important choice they pointed out that McCune had filled the same position in the Keokuk Packet Company for thirty years. His "close attention and watchfulness" to the needs of the company had led it from "infancy to giant greatness." All were agreed that McCune had developed the "most successful steamboat company in the West." No finer tribute could have been paid the hard-working McCune.<sup>23</sup>

But McCune was destined to serve the Keokuk Northern Line for only a short time. Death robbed the new corporation of his steadying hand at a time when the country was still suffering from the throes of the Panic of 1873 and a relentless railroad competition. In the brief year in which he took command of the helm, the Keokuk Northern gave promise of continued profits through generous dividends. The moment his hand was removed from the pilot wheel the ship was caught in the cross currents of adversity and gradually sank to rise no more.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Letter to writer from Edward J. Hughes, Secretary of State, Springfield, Illinois, dated Dec. 22, 1936, furnished information on reincorporation.

<sup>23</sup> Keokuk *Weekly Gate City*, March 12, 1873, Oct. 28, 1874.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 4, March 4, 18, Oct. 28, 1874; Ward *et al.*, Appellants and Respondents *v.* Davidson *et al.*, Respondents and Appellants in 89 *Missouri Reports*, 445-63. *Reports*, 445-63.

# SOUTHERN IOWA AGRICULTURE 1865-1870

*By Mildred Throne*

The first few years following the Civil War were years of prosperity and optimism for Middle Western farmers. Immigration, which had lagged during the war, increased with a rush. Prices rose, new farms were opened, railroads resumed their march to the west, and farming practices improved. "As every year showed more decisively, the decade after the war was the period of the rise of the Middle West to agricultural dominance."<sup>1</sup>

Iowa agriculture, in the post-Civil War years of 1865 to 1870, followed the general pattern of Middle Western growth. The development in the southern third of the state — an area dominated by 1870 by the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad — is an example of this growth. This area is typical of Iowa, typical of the Corn Belt as a whole. There is one variation in the Iowa picture in this region — while northern Iowa farmers turned more and more to dairy farming, those in the southern counties concentrated more and more on the corn-hog, grass-cattle phase of farming. Beef cattle, rather than dairy cattle, together with the famous Iowa "Fat Pig," became the prime products of southern Iowa farms.<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this study, the three southern tiers of counties — thirty-one in all — have been chosen.

Population in southern Iowa, which had increased only 6 per cent during the war years of 1860 to 1865, in the following five years jumped 42 per cent. Of the total population of the area by 1870, 77.4 per cent was classed as rural, as compared with a rural population of 76.4 per cent in the state as a whole.<sup>3</sup>

Several agencies were active in encouraging farmers to come to Iowa in these years. An abortive attempt had been made by the state in 1860 to

<sup>1</sup> Allan Nevins, *The Emergence of Modern America, 1865-1878* (New York, 1927), 154.

<sup>2</sup> Earle D. Ross, *Iowa Agriculture: An Historical Survey* (Iowa City, 1951), 76, 78-83.

<sup>3</sup> 1836-1880 *Iowa Census*, 196-9, 236-9.



form a board to promote immigration, but the war had intervened and the board was not revived until 1870. A private organization, the American Emigrant Company, had taken over many of the planned activities of this state board, and by 1865 had agents in several European countries.<sup>4</sup> But the most important agency for increasing the population was the railroad.

The Burlington & Missouri River Railroad planned for a strong advertising campaign to attract new settlers to southern Iowa. The goal of the company was twofold: first, to sell the lands granted to them by the government; second, and perhaps of more significance to the future both of the state and of the railroad, to sell these lands to actual farmers. Charles Russell Lowell, treasurer of the Burlington & Missouri at Burlington, had written, as early as 1859: "We are beginning to find that he who buildeth a railroad west of the Mississippi must also find a population and build up business."<sup>5</sup> In 1869 the Burlington had secured the services of George Harris, who had been in charge of the land department of the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad in Missouri. Harris heartily subscribed to the belief that success depended on the "price and credit policies" of the land department.

From the company's standpoint, the primary consideration in fixing land prices was one that was universally shared and approved at the time: the necessity of filling up the country. Only thus could the railroad have the indispensable clientele of shippers and travelers, and any sales policy that restricted immigration or antagonized actual settlers for the sake of some immediate pecuniary advantage would clearly defeat its own ends. The making of money from land sales as a separate business, although highly desirable and constantly in view, was to be subordinate to the progress of colonization.<sup>6</sup>

With this in view, the railroad made plans to sell their lands to actual farmers on a ten-year payment plan, with provisions for the cultivation of a certain minimum part of the land yearly.

However, since the Burlington lands were not placed on sale until 1870,

<sup>4</sup> Marcus L. Hansen, "Official Encouragement of Immigration to Iowa," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 29: 167-73 (April, 1921); Richard C. Overton, *Burlington West . . .* (Cambridge, 1941), 210.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Overton, *Burlington West . . .*, 159. For the building of this road, see Mildred Throne, "The Burlington & Missouri River Railroad in Iowa," *The Palimpsest*, 33:1-32 (January, 1952).

<sup>6</sup> Overton, *Burlington West . . .*, 293-4.

the influence of the railroad before that date was largely indirect but nevertheless powerful. Settlers were coming west rapidly in the postwar years, even without urging or propaganda. It was natural, in those years of railroad building, that they should follow the rails and settle as close as possible to quick transportation. In Adams County, for instance, in 1868 new settlers were "literally pouring in . . ." because of the "location and commencement of construction of the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad," which gave "a great impetus to immigration."<sup>7</sup>

The postwar years also saw a new type of land-seeker in Iowa. The true pioneer — the pathbreaker — was going farther west to the Plains. The men and women who came to Iowa in the sixties and seventies were looking for permanent homes, good markets for their crops, and prosperity. This is seen in the many reports of better houses, more barns, and improved methods of farming. Henry County reported in 1868 that the "transient settlers" had gone farther west, "where they can still be pioneers, and in their stead others locate, build fine houses, and erect substantial improvements, designing to pass a lifetime here." In Montgomery County in 1870 the pioneers were "pulling up stakes and starting for western Nebraska, and Kansas, and a better class of farmers [was] pouring in with means and taking up farms in our midst." Improvements were reported from Warren County in 1868, in a year full of "bustle and activity." New houses and barns and improved farming practices were in evidence. Farming was "fast becoming treated as a science, not as formerly, simply to plow, sow and reap."<sup>8</sup> This same theme runs through all the county reports of these years.

The columns of the local newspapers were also effective agencies for securing new settlers. These columns were often copied by eastern papers, or the newspapers themselves were sent by Iowans to friends in the East. Letters to farm journals, describing Iowa lands and prospects, were another form of advertising and encouragement to easterners looking toward the West. The prices of \$10 to \$20 per acre for wild land, and \$20 to \$50 for improved farms, must have been a big inducement to residents of the high-priced eastern regions. The *Country Gentleman* in 1866 carried a letter

<sup>7</sup> *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1868, 327.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 379-80, 457; 1870, 496. For the subject of improving farm practices, see Mildred Throne, "'Book Farming' in Iowa, 1840-1870," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY*, 49:117-42 (April, 1951).

from George Sprague in which he estimated the cost of opening an 80-acre Iowa farm, paying one-third down, as follows:

First payment, \$5 per acre	\$133.00
Pair of farm horses, 1100 or 1200 lbs. each	240.00
Harness and wagon	130.00
1 breaking and 1 stirring plow	30.00
2 cows, \$25 each	50.00
Lumber for plain house, 15x20 ft., one story	60.00
Doors, windows, sash	20.00
2 Carpenters, 4 days at \$2/day	16.00
	<hr/>
	\$679.00 <sup>9</sup>

The Fontanelle newspaper gave the experiences of Samuel Smith, who came to Adair County "with a large family, six horses, two wagons, nine head of cattle, and \$75 in money." Within three years he had "eighty acres of good land worth \$1,500, four horses, twenty-five head of cattle — ten of them milch cows, and only owes \$600 on his land."<sup>10</sup>

Letters to the newspapers "back home" also advertised Iowa. These almost invariably painted conditions in the most glowing of terms. T. M. Ewing of Adair County wrote to an Ohio newspaper in 1869:

For the benefit of your readers that keep their cattle in little, "one horse" pastures, I would say, come to Adair county, and I will show them pastures that will make their eyes water. — To-day the grass is from six to fifteen inches high, and so thick you can't see the ground. Here we can pasture thousands of cattle without any expense, except looking after, and salting them. — To winter stock we cut prairie grass, which costs about \$1.50 per ton, in the stack. . . . There is now a heavy emigration. The prairies are being dotted with new homes. Prairie breaking is going on in every direction. We break with every kind of team, from two horses up to the heavy team of six yoke of oxen. We use every sized plough, from twelve to thirty inch. Working oxen are worth \$150 per yoke and number one horses are worth \$200 each. . . . Stock raising pays. — Manufacturing pays. Everything pays except idleness, drunkenness and shiftlessness. . . .<sup>11</sup>

The eastern farmers who came west in response to this stream of propaganda from individuals and organizations could no longer secure land by

<sup>9</sup> *Country Gentleman*, 27:27 (Jan. 11, 1866).

<sup>10</sup> Fontanelle *Adair County Register*, March 25, 1859.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, June 17, 1869.



pre-emption or at the old government price of \$1.25 per acre. By the end of the Civil War most of the government land in Iowa had been sold. Only about four and a half million of the state's 36,000,000 acres remained in the hands of the government — available for homesteading — and these acres were mostly located in the northern and northwestern counties. The settler who came to southern Iowa could either buy land from those who were selling out and moving farther west, or from land agents and speculators, or — after 1870 — from the railroad. Since most of southern Iowa was in the hands of farmers, or of land speculators, or had been allocated to the railroads, very little homesteading was done in that area. Many eastern land speculators had bought large tracts of land with government military land warrants, but few of them held the land long enough to make a good profit.<sup>12</sup> Most of the speculators had sold out before 1860, but a few retained their holdings. In Adair County, in particular, "a large share of the best lands in the north part" of the county was still held, in 1868, by "an eastern speculator, who refuses to sell to those seeking homes, except at exorbitant prices."<sup>13</sup> This situation aroused the ire both of the citizens of the county and of those prospective citizens who were seeking new homes. The land speculator was always probably the most hated man on any frontier. To actual farmers, there was something evil about holding land out of cultivation in order to make a profit. Idle land was a waste and, thus, a sin.

A great part of the vacant land, however, was held by local "land agents" who were only too anxious to sell, and thus did not bear the stigma of "speculator." Almost all newspapers carried large advertisements of wild land, timber, and improved farms for sale. Ninde, Williams & Company, "Prairie Land Agency" in Oskaloosa, advertised prairie lands for \$6.25 an acre and improved or semi-improved farms for from \$10 to \$26 per acre. In Henry County in 1866 "A. Yancy, Esq., Real Estate Agent" sold prairie lands for \$12 to \$25 per acre. The editors of the Fontanelle newspaper, Kilburn and Rutt, were also land agents, with 20,000 acres of unimproved land which they sold at \$2.50 to \$10.00 per acre. Two years later, in 1870, they were advertising 90,000 more acres at \$3.00 to \$10.00. Practically every town of any size had one or two land agents. Prices for improved farms ranged from \$10 to \$50 or \$60, while unimproved lands sold from

<sup>12</sup> Roscoe L. Lokken, *Iowa: Public Land Disposal* (Iowa City, 1942), 128, 141-2.

<sup>13</sup> Fontanelle *Adair County Register*, June 4, 1868.



\$10 to \$20 per acre, with state "school lands" selling for as low as \$1.50.<sup>14</sup>

The new farmers buying these Iowa lands were interested not only in grain farming but in livestock as well. The wide expanse of open prairie, especially in the less settled western counties of southern Iowa, was a great attraction to farmers interested in stock raising. The number of cattle in Iowa increased 86 per cent between 1860 and 1870; in southern Iowa this increase was 76 per cent. The significant fact, however, is that the greater part of this increase occurred in the newer western counties. In eleven counties in the southeastern part of the state — Des Moines, Louisa, Lee, Washington, Henry, Van Buren, Jefferson, Keokuk, Mahaska, Wapello, and Davis — cattle increased only 35 per cent during the decade. Comparing these figures with the totals of eleven western counties — Pottawattamie, Mills, Fremont, Cass, Montgomery, Page, Adair, Adams, Taylor, Union, and Ringgold — the increase in cattle was 162 per cent. Hogs, on the other hand, increased 230 per cent in the state in this decade and 179 per cent in southern Iowa. Taking the same eastern and western counties as a comparison, the increase in the east was 104 per cent, while in the west there were 461 per cent more swine in 1870 than in 1860.<sup>15</sup> The eastern counties were older and had the advantage of the railroad all during the decade; the western counties were reached by the railroad only in 1869. Here then is another example of the cycle of frontier farming — first, livestock which can walk to market; then grains, when transportation facilities appear.

Many reports came from the western counties on the increased interest in both cattle and hogs. In addition to cattle owned and bred by the farmers, large droves were sent into southwestern Iowa for grazing during the summer months, some from the eastern counties and some from Missouri. Texas cattle were driven through this district on the way to the railhead at Ottumwa during the decade. "This practice stopped suddenly shortly after 1870. By this time the railroads reached entirely across the state and the prairie in southern Iowa was mostly taken by settlers."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Oskaloosa *Herald*, Jan. 12, 1865; Mt. Pleasant *Home Journal*, March 23, 1866; Fontanelle *Adair County Register*, May 21, 1868; Jan. 6, 1870; Rufus Blanchard, *Hand-Book of Iowa* . . . (Chicago, 1867), 35-69.

<sup>15</sup> These percentages were figured from tables in the 1836-1880 *Iowa Census*, 350-51, 360-61.

<sup>16</sup> John A. Hopkins, Jr. and C. R. F. Smith, "When Iowa Was a Range Country," *Wallaces' Farmer*, 53:59 (Jan. 13, 1928). See account of cattle drive across Iowa in 1866 in W. W. Baldwin (ed.), "Driving Cattle from Texas to Iowa, 1866," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 14:243-62 (April, 1924).

Improved cattle were also receiving more attention in southern Iowa, but the greater majority were still "grades" and "scrubs."<sup>17</sup> Distance from market, plenty of grass, and large crops of corn made cattle raising profitable, especially in the more isolated western counties, but the urge to improve the breed of the stock was still slight, although both newspapers and farm leaders never tired of pointing out to farmers the advantages of better breeding. A nucleus of fine breeding was to be found in Cass County, however, where Oliver Mills, as early as 1855, had introduced the Durham, or Shorthorn, into western Iowa. The impetus of this development had come from other southern Iowa stockmen — Timothy Day of Van Buren County and H. G. Stuart of Lee County.<sup>18</sup>

Hogs were increasing not only in numbers but in quality. "Since this stock is the principal medium of converting the corn crop into cash, any suggestion to improve the quality is seized upon with avidity, and the farmer who has not abandoned the common, and adopted the improved breed, must prove a rare exception," was the comment of the secretary of the State Agricultural Society in 1867.<sup>19</sup>

The relative profits of hogs and cattle were constantly discussed and debated. This interest is another indication that by the late sixties farming in Iowa had definitely lost its pioneer subsistence character and had become a business where profits and losses were carefully figured. A. G. Nye of Jefferson County considered both sides of the question:

In relation to the relative profits of raising hogs, and horses or cattle, it must be said in favor of hogs, that they come into market early at from fourteen to twenty months old, are raised with much less labor and attention, and require a good deal less capital than cattle or horses. On the other hand, they require the richest feed, nearly their whole feed being grain. If a farmer turns his principal attention to hogs, he must have almost his whole farm in corn, from year to year, which will soon exhaust even the rich soil of Iowa. There are many fields in this neighborhood (which

<sup>17</sup> Council Bluffs *Bugle*, Dec. 26, 1867; Fontanelle *Adair County Register*, June 16, 1870; *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1867, 9; 1868, 13-14.

<sup>18</sup> *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1863, 134-5; *History of Van Buren County . . .* (Chicago, 1878), 582; *Iowa Farmer and Horticulturist*, 1:176 (January, 1854); John A. Hopkins, Jr., *Economic History of the Production of Beef Cattle in Iowa* (Iowa City, 1928), 65-6; *Proceedings, Eighth Annual Meeting, Iowa Improved Livestock Breeders Assn.*, 1881, p. 102; *Keokuk Daily Gate City*, Oct. 8, 1855.

<sup>19</sup> *Iowa Agricultural Report* 1867, 10; 1868, 15-16, 427; 1870, 14-15, 465.

has been settled twenty-five years) that will no longer produce a good crop of corn.<sup>20</sup>

J. Jones of Davis County had a very low opinion of the popular and profitable hog. He considered hog cholera a "blessing in disguise." According to his figures, 15 bushels of corn would produce 100 pounds of pork, which was worth \$4.00, or 26 cents per bushel for the corn, while 90 bushels of corn would produce 100 pounds of beef worth \$66.00, or 73 cents per bushel for the corn.<sup>21</sup> Others figured profits differently. A State Agricultural Society committee on swine reported their findings on the costs of raising hogs and cattle in 1867. A hog of 320 pounds would cost \$11.50 to raise, would sell for \$16.00, giving a profit of \$4.50. A "scrub" steer of 1,200 pounds would cost \$48.80 to feed, would sell for \$60.00, the profit being \$11.20. If the farmer raised Durham cattle, of 1,600 pounds each, the cost of raising would be \$59.00, the selling price \$96.00, and the profit \$37.00.<sup>22</sup>

If the farmer cared to do a little figuring from these estimates, he would find that he could raise four hogs with the same amount of labor and grain as he would spend on one scrub steer, and from these four hogs would net a profit of \$18.00, instead of \$11.20 for the one steer. He very probably did this figuring, or at least found by experience that he could make at least as much money on hogs with less labor, for by 1870 there were almost three times as many hogs in Iowa as cattle. In the southern counties alone there were 1,000,000 more hogs in 1870 than in 1860.<sup>23</sup> Iowa was definitely becoming a corn and hog state, in spite of many pleas for diversification.

The predominance of livestock led farmers to give more attention to the production of feed for this stock, and the farm machines which flooded the markets in the sixties enabled him to cultivate more land, thereby producing more grain. Perhaps the greatest change in Iowa farming during the decade of the sixties was the increasing use of this new farm machinery. While the scythe, the hoe, and the grain cradle were still in use, the new reapers, mowers, threshers, cultivators, corn planters, and wheat drills were gaining in popularity. The high prices of the war years encouraged many a

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 1867, 102-103.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-2.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 99-100.

<sup>23</sup> 1836-1880 *Iowa Census*, 350-53, 360-61.



farmer to invest in a machine he could not have afforded a few years before. The 1867 agricultural report contains a long illustrated list of the many different makes of equipment then in use. Cultivators at \$30 to \$60, gang plows at \$75 to \$95, the Marsh and Cayuga Chief harvesters (the latter selling from \$120 to \$185), reaping and mowing machines at \$130 to \$190, self-raking reapers for \$170 to \$200, threshing machines at \$500 to \$640 — these and many other elaborate and expensive machines were being used in Iowa.<sup>24</sup>

Many of these implements were manufactured in the east, in Ohio and New York in particular, but frontier localism opposed buying “foreign” importations. Editors constantly urged their subscribers to buy at home, and each new manufacturing plant was greeted with an elaborate “puff.” The Clarinda paper advertised the plows made by their “enterprising townsmen, Messrs. Chamberlain & Herrold,” while a Washington editor extolled the virtues of the “very superior” reaper and mower made by Rose and Harrington.<sup>25</sup>

Corn cultivation, which had not benefited by the reapers and mowers, now began to enjoy the advantages of the mechanical revolution. Riding and double shovel plows enabled the farmer to prepare his field quickly. Hand planters were used widely by the middle sixties. Cornelius Skiff of Grinnell had invented, in 1867, a combination corn plow and seeder which sold for \$75.<sup>26</sup> These tools brought a change in the cultivation of corn. Rufus Blanchard, in his 1867 *Hand-Book of Iowa*, described this method in detail:

The ground is plowed in early spring, one team and a man plowing two and a half acres per day. Next, the field is laid out in rows four feet apart, one team marking four rows at once with a marking machine, which is a simple shaft or piece of joist, sixteen feet long, with four sled-runner shaped planks inserted in it four feet apart, and a tongue attached to hitch the horses to. The next process is to drive across these rows thus made with a corn planter. One man and team will plant ten acres per day. When the corn is well up in the blade the cultivating process is commenced by dragging or harrowing it. Two rows are gone over at once, the team straddling a row, and the harrow teeth so set as to stir the ground thoroughly each side of this row to the next rows,

<sup>24</sup> *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1867, 219-61.

<sup>25</sup> *Pacific City Herald*, Feb. 2, 1860; *Washington Press*, March 15, 1865.

<sup>26</sup> *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1867, 226.



each way. A sulky plow is sometimes used instead of a harrow. This is a gig-shaped machine on two wheels, with diamond-shaped teeth projecting downwards from the axle. The driver rides on his seat and goes over the field two rows at a time, in the same manner as with the harrow. Next comes the cultivator, drawn by a single horse, going through one row at a time. After the corn has been gone through with a cultivator, it is generally ploughed through twice more with a shovel plough, and laid by till harvest. The corn is generally husked on the stalk, and stored in rough cribs made of rails built cob-house fashion, when it is ready for market.<sup>27</sup>

This "market" was, more often than not, the hogs and cattle on the farm. Mr. Blanchard pointed out that corn would sell for but one cent a pound on the market, while pork and beef would bring twelve or sixteen cents a pound.

In Louisa County practically the same methods were followed. The corn rows were marked by "four wagon wheels properly distanced," double cultivators were used, and the seed was planted two rows at a time by corn planters. Henry County farmers plowed "stubble or stalk ground," planted with corn planters, and rolled or cultivated three times.<sup>28</sup>

In the decade 1860 to 1870 the value of machinery in southern Iowa rose from \$2,354,441 to \$6,716,726. But much of this equipment had been bought "on time," and many voices prophesied impending disaster. In Clarke County it was suggested that "More labor and less buying *on credit* would be better," while an Adair County farmer warned that the advantages of the new implements "have been overcome in many instances by contracting debts in purchasing the same. . . ." "G. S." of Des Moines suggested that the buying of many of the machines was influenced by "flaming lithographic pictures" and even, at times, by "strong drink."<sup>29</sup> The war years and invention had overstimulated Iowa agriculture, but the prosperity of the decade made many blind to the financial shoals ahead.

Nevertheless, the machines, whether paid for or not, enabled the farmer to cultivate larger areas and thus produce more feed for his stock. In the central and western counties of southern Iowa most of the corn was fed to stock, but in the eastern counties, where there were fewer cattle and hogs,

<sup>27</sup> Blanchard, *Hand-Book of Iowa*, 27-8.

<sup>28</sup> *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1869, 357; 1870, 485.

<sup>29</sup> 1836-1880 *Iowa Census*, 270-73; *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1870, 388, 430; *Country Gentleman*, 35:772 (Dec. 8, 1870).

the farmers shipped a good deal of their surplus grain east by railroad. Jefferson County sent its surplus to Chicago; Des Moines County shipped corn in the ear both to Chicago and to St. Louis; Lee County sold corn in St. Louis; Van Buren County found a "ready market" on the Des Moines Valley Railroad; Henry County shipped corn to Chicago. Between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000 pounds of corn were shipped yearly via the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad between 1863 and 1869, while the number of hogs shipped ranged between 100,000 and 200,000, and the number of cattle from 20,000 to 30,000.<sup>30</sup> In the first flush of excitement and enthusiasm over the presence of the railroads, eastern Iowa farmers tended to neglect livestock and devote all their attention to the several grains. "Hawk-Eye" of Lee County complained in 1870:

Prices are good, but stock scarce and steadily year by year growing scarcer. This is one of the consequences of railroad transportation continually carrying off the grain as soon as raised, and less stock being reared than formerly. Spring calves bring almost as much as ordinary two-year olds, and the butchers play sad havoc with them. Butter and cheese are high because cows are scarce and milk still scarcer. It is said that the center of wheat production is moving steadily west — so it is with cattle.<sup>31</sup>

The counties in central and western Iowa, because of the expense of carrying their grain to the railroad, concentrated their attention on cattle.<sup>32</sup> With the completion of the railroads across the state, and with the addition of some north and south lines, a better balance of agriculture would be obtained, but the staples — corn, hogs, and cattle — retained their dominance. The fertile Iowa soil could and did produce many other crops; but the coming of the railroads, which made specialized farming possible and profitable, drew Iowa definitely into the Corn Belt type of agricultural economy.

As the western less wooded counties filled with farmers and with livestock, the fencing problem became acute. Iowans, ever boastful of their state, were forced to admit at least one deficiency — a lack of timber. This was especially true in the western counties. The wood-burning railroad locomotives of the sixties added to the already large requirements for

<sup>30</sup> *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1863, 15; 1864, 17; 1865, 32; 1867, 10, 11, 32, 145, 154, 158, 167; 1868, 30-31; 1869, 41-2; 1870, 262.

<sup>31</sup> *Country Gentleman*, 35:581 (Sept. 15, 1870).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 35:772 (Dec. 8, 1870).

housing, fuel, and fencing. Likewise, until the railroads had reached the western counties, the cost of bringing in "foreign" lumber was prohibitive.

In 1867 the state had endeavored by legislation to solve the timber shortage. One hundred dollars of the value of a farm was exempted from taxation for ten years for every acre of trees planted.<sup>33</sup> J. R. Shaffer, secretary of the State Agricultural Society, pointed out that groves would protect the farm and its cattle and increase the fertility of the soil, and would also in time enable Iowans to use native timber and thus save the cost of importation. The railroads, which required one cord of wood to carry a train forty miles, had to buy their fuel outside the state.<sup>34</sup> Iowa's native timber in 1870 amounted to 2,524,793 acres, of which 1,222,001 acres were in the southern third of the state. The seventeen counties west of the center of this area, however, contained only 385,422 wooded acres. Adair County fared the worst, with only 8,529 acres. The acreage planted with trees was already increasing, however. In 1865, 20,825 acres had been planted; by 1867, when the state exemption was enacted, this number increased to 48,774 acres. Only 3,629 of these acres, however, were in southern Iowa. In 1875 this total had jumped to 13,223 acres in that area, but the state total had meanwhile increased to 65,549. A probable explanation of this lack of interest in a sorely needed product was the fact that by the end of the decade farmers could get all the lumber they needed by railroad. In 1868 the Burlington had shipped 16,283,034 feet of lumber and timber west; in 1869 the total was 24,872,367 feet.<sup>35</sup> This was the era of high prices and prosperity. The farmer could easily afford to buy his lumber and devote his farmland to more profitable crops, crops which would mature faster than slow growing trees.

The fencing problem, however, had not been solved in the sixties. The grain farmers still wanted to fence stock and make the stockowner liable for any damages, while the stock raisers saw no good reason why the grain fields should not be fenced. Since most farmers in Iowa raised both stock and grain, it was not a clear-cut issue. In western Iowa, where, it was claimed, "every farmer intends to make stock-raising his business," the various herd and stock laws engendered a great deal of bitter discussion. Stockmen claimed that grain farmers were too lazy to build good fences;

<sup>33</sup> *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1868, 9.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 1867, 28-30.

<sup>35</sup> 1836-1880 *Iowa Census*, 346-7; *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1868, 30; 1869, 41.



the grain farmers argued that the immigrant could not afford to put up expensive fences until he had sold one or two crops.

Adair County, with very little timber, discussed the question pro and con in the columns of the Fontanelle paper. The editor, interested in attracting new settlers, favored fencing stock. "Many of those who come in here to settle are limited in their means; and their first object is to get a piece of land, get it broken out and a house built — and to be obliged at once to build a hog-tight fence is a tax which many of them are not able to stand, and hence they are of necessity obliged to go elsewhere. . . ." <sup>36</sup> When the law to fence stock came up for a vote in Adair County in 1870 the controversy grew bitter and quickly descended to personalities. W. H. Madison considered the law "a curse to the poor man and the county generally," and added that "of course the lazy farmer will vote for the Stock Law, for the reason that it enables him to exist without fencing his farm." <sup>37</sup> A "True Friend of Progress" promptly retorted that Mr. Madison "talked as though he had his farm well fenced, when the fact is, he has about forty acres fenced on three sides with a post and two basswood splinters." <sup>38</sup>

Neither the dire prophesies nor the optimistic promises came true, however. The law was passed in Adair County, <sup>39</sup> and the region continued to increase both in grain and livestock. The issue serves to illustrate an advance from pioneer farming to settled community activity. The farmer could not go his own way, regardless of others; he could not be the pioneer individualist he had once been. As areas become more thickly settled, and farm impinged on farm, neighbors had to decide among themselves, or by the traditional ballot box, such problems as arose.

The high cost of fencing in the sixties — estimated at \$600 for eighty acres <sup>40</sup> — plus the desire to keep farming costs low in order to attract more settlers, resulted in the practice of herding in most counties. In 1870 a township "herd company" was organized in Adair County, and a boy was hired to collect the cattle each morning and return them at night. The cost of herding was comparatively low; in Pottawattamie County in 1870 it

<sup>36</sup> Fontanelle *Adair County Register*, May 7, 1868.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, July 7, 1870.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, July 21, 1870.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 13, 1870.

<sup>40</sup> Council Bluffs *Bugle*, Feb. 10, 1870.



ranged from \$4.00 to \$5.00 per head per season.<sup>41</sup> But with the passing of the free range this problem disappeared. When a farmer could not turn his stock loose to graze on the open prairie, but must keep them on his own pasture, both fencing and the cultivation of tame grasses were encouraged and fostered.

Tame grasses were still in the experimental stage during the sixties, although toward the end of the decade a definite pattern could be seen. "Meadows are produced by sowing timothy seed on rye ground in the fall, and clover in the spring," was one report.<sup>42</sup> Henry Wallace of Madison County had long preached the advantages of clover and timothy, especially clover. He vigorously attacked the common belief that clover would not grow in Iowa.<sup>43</sup> It would not be until the 1880's, however, when the wild grasslands were almost exhausted, that tame grass pastures really came into their own, and blue grass became one of the most important crops of southern Iowa.

Fruit also received more attention in this decade, in spite of a long standing belief that Iowa could not produce fruits. Careless horticulture had at first been a cause of discouragement. Trees, bought from tree peddlers or from "foreign" nurseries, were put out at random and corn or potatoes planted in the intervening spaces. Cultivation of these crops, plus injuries from animals wandering among the young trees, caused great loss, but gradually a few men developed fine bearing orchards.<sup>44</sup> Between 1863 and 1867 the number of fruit trees in southern Iowa almost doubled, from 1,320,532 to 2,183,802, the number being close to half of all the fruit trees in the state.<sup>45</sup> As in the case of all crops which required more care and attention than the pioneer farmer could give, the largest concentration in the sixties was in the older and more settled southeastern counties. The great expansion in fruit farming, however, was to come in the seventies.

Wheat and oats were secondary crops in Iowa, but they were an impor-

<sup>41</sup> Fontanelle *Adair County Register*, Sept. 5, 1867; Hopkins and Smith, "When Iowa Was a Range Country," 48; Council Bluffs *Bugle*, Feb. 10, 1870.

<sup>42</sup> *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1864, 301-74 *passim*; 1865, 135-6; 1866, 359.

<sup>43</sup> Henry Wallace, *Uncle Henry's Own Story* . . . (3 vols., Des Moines, 1917-1919), 3:8.

<sup>44</sup> *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1865, 138, 142, 143-4; *Iowa Horticultural Society Report*, 1867, 72-3; *Country Gentleman*, 43:56-7 (Jan. 21, 1869).

<sup>45</sup> State total—1864: 2,337,592; 1867—4,704,966. See 1836-1880 *Iowa Census*, 342-5.

tant part of the farm economy of the sixties, with oats outstripping wheat.<sup>46</sup> Changes could be noted by 1870 in regard to several agricultural "crazes" of the early sixties. Sorghum, introduced with much fanfare as the North's answer to the South's sugar — cut off by the war — lost much of its popularity after peace had opened trade again. Many reasons were given for the failure of sorghum culture; one punster finally settled the question, to his own satisfaction, by saying that sorghum was "numbered with the hosts of humbugs that stalked out a miserable existence and then withered unblest," while another explained that the decline was because "not one in twenty likes the miserable stuff. . . ." <sup>47</sup> Sheep, never too popular in Iowa, had enjoyed a "craze" during the war years, again due to lack of southern trade — this time in cotton. As wool prices rose, Iowa's sheep population increased from 259,041 in 1860 to a high of 1,598,226 in 1867. With the fall of wool prices after 1865, an immediate decline in sheep began — 855,492 in 1870 to half that number a decade later. Southern Iowa followed this trend, with about half the state's sheep in each of the enumerations.<sup>48</sup> Although there was considerable diversification in southern Iowa's agricultural picture by 1870, a definite trend was noticeable — away from the minor crops toward emphasis on hogs, cattle, corn, and grass.

Interest in farming as a business is everywhere evident by 1870. The whole subject of agriculture, of proper husbandry, better profits, the place of the farmer in social and economic life, the farmer and politics — all this was being discussed and disputed. The farmer of Iowa was no longer satisfied with mere subsistence. His work now became a commercial enterprise, a way of making money, even of growing rich. The isolation of the frontier did not appeal to the farmer of the sixties and seventies. Men of vision and foresight desired more social intercourse with their fellow farmers, because with increased speed of transportation and communication the farmer's horizon had widened. Newspapers and farm journals brought him into vicarious touch with other farmers, and a desire for a closer interchange of views with immediate neighbors was the result. This widened interest did not apply to all men, of course — it never has — but a sufficient number were moved by the changing age to bring about the beginnings of a new phase of farm life in Iowa and in the nation.

<sup>46</sup> 1836-1880 *Iowa Census*, 284-9, 296-8.

<sup>47</sup> *Iowa Agricultural Report*, 1872, 288; 1874, 468.

<sup>48</sup> 1836-1880 *Iowa Census*, 362-4.

During the Civil War, and especially in the years immediately following, neighborhood farmers' clubs sprang up in great numbers. The common purposes were to overcome the isolation which was, significantly, for the first time being widely regarded as a social handicap, and to cultivate the intellectual interests and capacities of rural people. . . .<sup>49</sup>

The state and county agricultural societies brought farmers together once or twice a year, but the farmers' clubs in neighborhoods and townships provided discussion of farm problems almost at the farmers' dooryard. Meetings were held weekly, semi-monthly, or monthly, usually at the school house or at the township village center. As the clubs expanded to include several townships, or even a whole county, the members met at the county seat, usually during the winter months when the farmers' work was slack. These meetings were informal, they reached the individual farmer directly, and they helped to spread the gospel of better farming into all corners of the state.<sup>50</sup> The topics discussed covered a wide range of subjects: agriculture in all its many phases, horticulture, and stock breeding. Many of the clubs were also the instigators of new or revived county agricultural societies, while many more were forerunners of the Patrons of Husbandry in the seventies.<sup>51</sup>

The Civil War decade began as Iowa reached the end of her frontier period. The years may be called an interlude between pioneer subsistence farming and commercial agriculture. In these years the railroad crossed southern Iowa from east to west and sent branches north and south. The war years brought new markets, new machinery, and higher prices. They also brought debt and inflation, with the inevitable unrest and discontent when prices fell and mortgages or notes became due. Increasing communication of neighbor with neighbor brought organizations which would give voice to this unrest in the decade of the seventies, when the bill for the too-rapid expansion of the sixties was presented for payment.

<sup>49</sup> Paul M. Johnstone, "Old Ideals Versus New Ideas in Farm Life," U. S. Dept. of Agric., *Yearbook 1940* (Washington, 1941), 133-4.

<sup>50</sup> Throne, " 'Book Farming' in Iowa, 1840-1870," 132-3.

<sup>51</sup> For the story of the Patrons of Husbandry, see Mildred Throne, "The Grange in Iowa, 1868-1875," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY*, 47:289-324 (October, 1949).



## BEN SAMUELS IN THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION OF 1860

*By Owen Peterson*

In Iowa, as in most of the other states of the new West, Republicanism and antislavery sentiment were making notable inroads on Democratic strength in the late 1850's. The principal question confronting the Democrats, and the nation in general, had for some time been that of slavery in the territories. In the ten years following the Compromise of 1850 the question had grown increasingly vexatious and complex. In 1854 the Kansas-Nebraska bill, authored by Stephen A. Douglas, revived the question and introduced popular sovereignty as a doctrine for settlement of territorial slave problems. This policy permitted the territorial legislatures to decide for themselves the status of slavery within their borders.

During these years Democrats of the Northwest, who found it difficult to secure election to office and who hoped to pacify their constituents while avoiding the radicalism of the Republicans, rallied to the call of popular sovereignty. Southern Democrats at first accepted this principle with enthusiasm, but political rivalry within the party was leading to disaster.

In 1856, at their convention in Cincinnati, Democrats sought to end the growing hostility within the party fold with a platform satisfactory to both factions.<sup>1</sup> It had seemed an amicable settlement of differences in the convention, but when presented to the people it became one of the most controversial platforms in Democratic history. Southerners went back to their homes and interpreted the resolutions as a guarantee for the institution of slavery, while Northern Democrats construed it as a permit for the territorial legislatures to enact whatever provisions they deemed desirable.

In spite of these differences the Democracy triumphed in the national elections that year. However, throughout the administration of James Buchanan, from 1857 to 1861, the debate was continued on the stump, in Congress, and in state conventions. The activities of the Emigrant Aid

<sup>1</sup> For the crucial plank of this platform, endorsing the Southern position on state rights and the Kansas-Nebraska Act as "the only sound and safe solution of the slavery question," see Roy F. Nichols, *The Disruption of American Democracy* (New York, 1948), Appendix.



Societies, which gave financial assistance to Northerners wishing to emigrate into the territories, the petitions from abolitionist New England which flooded Congress, and the denunciations of slavery from Northern pulpits antagonized the Southerner and widened the breach. In 1857 came the Dred Scott decision which declared, in effect, that Congress could not prohibit slavery in the territories. Douglas' popular sovereignty stand, endorsed by Northern Democrats, was tossed aside by Southern Democrats, who now based their position firmly on the decision of the Supreme Court. Thus, the Dred Scott case split the Democratic party in two. The climax to the controversy came in 1860 at two disastrous Democratic national conventions, held in Charleston and Baltimore.

The Iowa delegation to the convention in 1860 included Augustus Caesar Dodge of Burlington, D. A. Finch of Des Moines, William H. Merritt of Cedar Rapids, T. W. Clagett of Keokuk, W. H. M. Pusey of Council Bluffs, J. W. Bosler of Sioux City, E. H. Thayer of Muscatine, and Benjamin M. Samuels of Dubuque. Samuels, a young Democrat of growing importance in his state and a speaker of high regard, was one of the leading spokesmen for the pro-Douglas platform calling for non-intervention by Congress in territorial legislation on slavery. In the crucial debate at Charleston Samuels was selected by the Douglas phalanx to present the viewpoint of the Northwestern delegates. This event climaxed Samuels' brief political career, for with the fall of his party, the rise of Republicanism throughout the North, and his untimely death in 1863, this was the nearest that Samuels came to national political fame.

In accounting for Ben Samuels' prominence as a speaker and politician, it is necessary to understand his background and environment, his character, and his oratorical skills. He was born in Parkersburg, Virginia (now West Virginia), on December 21, 1823. Ben's father, Joseph H. Samuels, came from Shenandoah County, Virginia, where his family had long been influential. Joseph Samuels was the son of Judge Isaac Samuels and the brother of Green Berry Samuels, Congressman and State Supreme Court Justice. The family had lived in the vicinity of Woodstock and Mt. Jackson since before the Revolutionary War, and several of the Samuels had fought both in the Revolution and the War of 1812. The family was large and one of the most illustrious in the valley. At some unknown date between 1823 and 1833 Joseph Samuels and his family returned to Shenandoah County.

It is probable that young Ben received his early education at Woodstock Academy, since the Samuels family had taken an active part in the promotion and establishment of that school. Woodstock, like most other schools of that time, offered the student training in the classics and sciences as well as in the traditional three R's. The cultural and literary interests of his family undoubtedly also had an influence on the boy during these years. Upon completion of his preparatory education, Samuels entered Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) at Lexington, Virginia, and three years later was graduated with class honors. He immediately returned to Woodstock and began the study of law under his father. The availability of the large Samuels library and the assistance of his father, grandfather, and uncle, all eminent lawyers and judges, must have afforded the aspiring young man a unique advantage in his studies. In 1844 he was admitted to the bar.<sup>2</sup>

Further insight into the caliber of Samuels' education is found in newspaper comments that he "read considerably," was a man of "literary attainments," and that he was likely, on occasion, to intersperse his legal arguments with literary allusions and quotations. Samuels' interest in literary matters found an outlet in the Mt. Jackson Literary Society which he helped to organize in 1844. He also was active in the establishment of the Shenandoah I.O.O.F. Lodge in 1847.<sup>3</sup>

In the fall of 1847 the young Samuels emigrated to Iowa and settled in the city of Dubuque, where he opened a law practice in partnership with William Vandever. His ability and eloquence soon won him an extensive practice, and he became noted as an advocate. The defense in the more important criminal trials in the county usually was entrusted to him. In 1850 he was named Democratic county committeeman and shortly thereafter elected city attorney for Dubuque. He was re-elected to this office for three successive one-year terms, filling it satisfactorily "both as an able lawyer and a discreet and honorable man." At the same time he also served as a member of the Common Council of the city of Dubuque. In

<sup>2</sup> John W. Wayland, *A History of Shenandoah County, Virginia* (Strasburg, Virginia, 1927), 195, 245, 251-3, 263, 290-91, 429, 559-60, 638; Franklin T. Oldt, *History of Dubuque County, Iowa* (Chicago, 1911), 451, 635; *Dubuque Times*, Aug. 28, 1857, Aug. 21, 1863.

<sup>3</sup> *Dubuque Times*, Aug. 28, 1857, Aug. 21, 1863; Wayland, *History of Shenandoah County* . . ., 290-91; Edward H. Stiles, "Prominent Men of Early Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 10:262-3 (January-April, 1912).

1854 Samuels was elected a representative to the Iowa General Assembly and, in 1857, was nominated for Governor by the Democratic party.

Samuels stumped the state, declared himself an anti-bank man, and insisted that the banking law be submitted to the people for ratification. Despite the often highly partisan bias of newspaper accounts of that era, we can get a glimpse of Samuels' character and habits from them. The *Iowa City Crescent*, a Democratic newspaper and so, of course, favorable to the party's representative, commented, "In private life, Mr. Samuels sustains a most estimable character. As a husband and father and a consistent member of the Christian church, the record of his life is without a stain." The *Iowa State Journal*, a Democratic organ also, observed in 1857, "Mr. Samuels was not, we are frank to say, our first choice in the convention, yet when nominated, we are satisfied with the result. . . . [He] is a Democrat whose record is clean — a man of moral, temperate habits, a religious man — and a man of talent, energy and comprehensive views." In subsequent articles, the *Journal* described him as "energetic," "bold, fearless, and honest," and observed that "his frankness and candor is apparent to everyone who hears him." The *Oskaloosa Times* echoed these remarks.<sup>4</sup>

While these favorable evaluations from the presses of political allies are to be expected, when confirmed by the opposition they begin to take on weight. The *Dubuque Times*, which opposed Samuels throughout the campaign of 1857 on the ground that, while he was a respectable citizen, "no one ever dreamed that he was a suitable candidate for Governor of the State of Iowa," observed:

Personally we have a high regard for him. In social life he is a rare good fellow — the nucleus of mirth and a ring-leader in everything that heightens one's joy and makes him think better of his fellow men. In these qualities he has few superiors in the city. Professionally he stands among the leading members of the bar in the county. He has a good legal mind. . . . His intellect is good. . . . He stands well in the community as a citizen, lawyer, and a man of integrity.

After Samuels' defeat in 1857, the same paper commented, "Had there not been principles at stake involving the interests of the State and humanity, we could have desired a more general support of our fellow towns-

<sup>4</sup> *Iowa City Crescent*, Sept. 1, 1857; *Des Moines Iowa State Journal*, Sept. 5, 19, 1857; Aug. 20, 1859; *Oskaloosa Times*, May 24, 1860.



man, for he is a good fellow." Still later, the *Times* observed that he had a "great heart. He was magnanimous to everybody but himself."<sup>5</sup> The *Iowa City Republican*, in 1860, spoke favorably of both Samuels and his opponent, former law partner Vandever, after a debate in that city. The "courteous, gentlemanly and dignified" conduct of the speakers "not only added to their reputation as debaters and statesmen, but set an example worthy of imitation."<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the warmest commentary on Samuels' character is the simple but direct statement of James W. Grimes: "Of the Democratic nominee I have nothing to say. I believe Mr. Samuels to be an honorable man."<sup>7</sup>

Although defeated by Ralph P. Lowe in the election, the party turned to Samuels again in 1858 as its candidate for the office of United States Senator, a purely honorary choice, since the Republican control of the Iowa General Assembly assured the choice of a Republican Senator at that session. This action was significant, however, because it was an open repudiation by Iowa Democrats of the Buchanan administration. George W. Jones, the incumbent and Samuels' leading opponent in the nomination fight, had long been an ardent supporter of the Administration. But Iowa Democrats were looking toward the nomination of Stephen A. Douglas, Buchanan's opponent. Samuels was, of course, defeated for the Senatorship by ex-Governor James W. Grimes by a margin of twenty-three votes in the Seventh General Assembly. After these setbacks, Samuels returned to his practice in Dubuque until 1860 when he was nominated as the Democratic candidate for United States Representative from his district and was also named a delegate to the Democratic national convention.<sup>8</sup>

The diversity of Samuels' many political and speaking activities — in the courts, as city attorney, before the state legislature, and as a stump speaker in behalf of his own candidacy as well as that of others<sup>9</sup> — af-

<sup>5</sup> Dubuque *Times*, Aug. 28, Oct. 10, 1857; Aug. 21, 1863.

<sup>6</sup> *Iowa City Republican*, Sept. 12, 1860.

<sup>7</sup> Circular letter written by J. W. Grimes, Sept. 3, 1857, from William Salter, *The Life of James W. Grimes* (New York, 1876), 100.

<sup>8</sup> Oldt, *History of Dubuque County . . .*, 635; Louis Pelzer, "The History of Political Parties in Iowa from 1857 to 1860," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 7:182, 190 (April, 1909); *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 1:236 (October, 1893); *Iowa City Crescent*, Sept. 1, 1857; *Dubuque Times*, Aug. 21, 1863; Benjamin F. Gue, *History of Iowa* (4 vols., New York, 1903), 1:274-5, 355.

<sup>9</sup> During the campaign of 1859 Samuels made forty-five major campaign addresses in six weeks. *Des Moines Iowa State Journal*, Aug. 20, 1859.



forded the rising young politico a wide range of speech situations and experiences. From such circumstances arose Henry Clay, Stephen A. Douglas, and other leading statesmen of the era. As preparation for his role at Charleston this training had been excellent.

Of Samuels' appearance, there is general agreement on his handsomeness. Even his political opponents begrudgingly acknowledged this: one Republican editor sardonically noted in the campaign of 1860 that, "He possesses a *fine physique*," and another believed that, "He was doubtless selected by the Convention because of his personal appearance."<sup>10</sup> Samuels was described as being "of striking personal appearance, with a tall athletic form, a smooth shaven oval face, and brown hair." "In person he is a large and well-proportioned man;" "his appearance on the platform [is] imposing."<sup>11</sup> He was also a young man; at thirty-five he had run for Governor; he had been a candidate for United States Senator at thirty-seven; at the time of the Charleston convention he was only thirty-eight.

Samuels was famous as a speaker in Iowa by 1860. This reputation was not derived from any single field of endeavor, for as a lawyer, legislator, and campaigner he excelled. As a lawyer he was recognized as "one of the most brilliant orators among the old bar," and "one of the most eloquent as well as one of the ablest members of the Iowa bar."<sup>12</sup>

As a legislator, Samuels likewise was prominent. One of his contemporaries in the House of the Fifth General Assembly recalled, "Ben M. Samuels, of Dubuque [was] the leading Democratic member. . . . Samuels, until then unknown outside of Dubuque, soon in flights of oratory soared to distinction. . . . He was too well equipped as a speaker for anyone in the House to cope on even ground." This same legislator, in comparing the two houses of the General Assembly, concluded, "in point of brilliance, the House, on account of the splendor of Samuels, obscured the Senate."<sup>13</sup>

Newspapers of the era, especially the Democratic journals, abound with

<sup>10</sup> Iowa City *Republican*, Sept. 12, 1860; Dubuque *Times*, Aug. 28, 1857.

<sup>11</sup> Iowa City *Republican*, Sept. 12, 1860; Dubuque *Times*, Aug. 28, 1857; Aug. 21, 1863.

<sup>12</sup> Edward H. Stiles, "Judge John F. Dillon," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 9:12 (April, 1909); Stiles, "Prominent Men of Early Iowa," 262-3; Oldt, *History of Dubuque County* . . ., 451.

<sup>13</sup> "The Fifth Legislature Recalled," *Iowa Historical Record*, 1:81, 86 (April, 1885).

praise of Samuels' skill in handling campaign audiences as he stumped the state during his short political career. In the campaign of 1857 reporters termed his speeches "brief, appropriate, eloquent and powerful." Samuels was said to be "an able canvasser, a speaker of more than ordinary ability, eloquence and tact," "an able speaker — ready, fluent, and eloquent — yet argumentative and clear upon all points." One newspaper called his speech "as complete and finished a specimen of rich, thrilling and polished oratory as it was ever our pleasure to hear."<sup>14</sup> In 1859 Samuels was eulogized as "one of the most eloquent and convincing speakers in the State," "probably the most talented and eloquent speaker in the state of Iowa." The *Oskaloosa Times* reported that when the "Great Commoner of Iowa" closed his speech, "one long, loud, involuntary shout of applause arose from the multitude in approbation of the great truths so appropriately uttered."<sup>15</sup>

Not all accounts were so enthusiastic, however. The Republican press, understandably, was considerably more critical of Samuels' speaking efforts. The *Dubuque Times* criticized his participation in a political debate:

His mein from the start was that of a fancied superior — his very first sentence contained an ill-natured, ungentlemanly, grossly offensive allusion to his antagonist. . . . Hon. Ben M. Samuels is a political opponent of ours, but with no other feeling than that of neighborly kindness, we tell him that he has a consequential, dogmatic, dictatorial manner.<sup>16</sup>

In another debate, however, the *Iowa City Republican* went so far as to admit that in some respects — "the graces and flourishes of oratory" — Samuels was the superior of his Republican opponent.<sup>17</sup> In spite of the dissenting voice of his political opponents, the preponderance of evidence suggests that Samuels was a speaker of extraordinary ability.

Little information concerning Samuels' actual mode of speech delivery has survived. It is said that he spoke in "a clear, stentorian voice . . . the tones of his manly voice rang out on the air." "His clear, deliberate form of speech, delivered slowly, but without hesitation and with an air of confidence and candor, carried conviction." One contemporary noted:

<sup>14</sup> Des Moines *Iowa State Journal*, Sept. 5, 1857; Appanoose *Chieftain*, quoted in *Iowa State Journal*, Oct. 3, 1857.

<sup>15</sup> *Oskaloosa Times*, Sept. 8, 22, 1859. See also *Dubuque Herald*, May 5, July 11, 1860.

<sup>16</sup> *Dubuque Times*, quoted in *Iowa City Republican*, Aug. 15, 1860.

<sup>17</sup> *Iowa City Republican*, Sept. 12, 1860.

He possessed a splendid voice for either forensic debate or political speaking. He had a remarkable command of language. His manner was deliberate at first, but as he warmed with his subject, he became impassioned, his gestures vehement, yet always graceful, every word came out clear and full (he never paused for one), and he delighted in similes and illustrations.<sup>18</sup>

Discussion of his "energetic," "forcible," "powerful," "bold," and "impressive manner" lend added support to the conclusion that Samuels' speech was vigorous and moving.

In addition to an effective delivery, Samuels was adept in handling hecklers — a highly important skill in the rough and tumble politics of the time. The *Dubuque Herald*, in relating an incident when Samuels had disposed of a particularly noisy and troublesome dissenter, concluded, "Ben is never more in his element than when repelling insults, as he proved conclusively on this occasion."<sup>19</sup>

These then were skills which Ben Samuels carried with him into the political welter at Charleston in 1860: a good education, wide experience before a variety of audiences, legal acumen and training, skill in legislative debate and parliamentary maneuvering, a good voice, and an effective and vigorous speech delivery. "With all these qualifications, his name went before him and wherever he was announced to address the people, crowds flocked to hear him."<sup>20</sup> His battles well equipped him for the political skirmish in which the Democracy was to become involved at Charleston.

The Democrats in 1860 had split sectionally on the issue of whether Congress had the right to intervene in order to protect slaveholders going into the United States territories. Southern Democrats maintained that the Dred Scott decision of 1857 recognized the right of slaveholders to carry slaves, labeled by the decision as property, into the territories. They urged the party to incorporate this doctrine into its platform. The Northern Democrats rallied around Stephen A. Douglas and his doctrine of popular sovereignty — the right of each territory to determine for itself the status of slavery — and claimed that this had been the true meaning of the Cincinnati platform of 1856.

The convention site in 1860 was particularly ill-chosen, since Charles-

<sup>18</sup> Oskaloosa *Times*, Sept. 22, 1859; "The Fifth Legislature Recalled," 81; *Dubuque Times*, Aug. 21, 1863.

<sup>19</sup> *Dubuque Herald*, May 5, 1860.

<sup>20</sup> *Dubuque Times*, Aug. 21, 1863.



tionians were probably stronger in their loyalty to the South and reverence for the institution of slavery than almost any other group of Southerners. Fired by the editorials of Robert Barnwell Rhett in the *Charleston Mercury*, aroused by the speeches of Southern leaders during the convention, the citizenry of South Carolina filled the galleries of old Institute Hall to capacity and exerted a tremendous pressure upon the convention. During the first five days of the meeting, the feelings of the delegates had been fired to a feverous pitch of excitement as both sections sought to win victories in the procedural disputes over the seating of contesting delegations and the removal of the unit voting rule.<sup>21</sup> On the fifth day the resolutions committee made its recommendations for the party platform.

Ben Samuels addressed the national convention on April 29, 1860, the sixth day of the meeting, in defense of the pro-Douglas report of a minority of the resolutions committee, of which he had been a member. The platform had been debated for an entire day before Samuels spoke, with men of such skill and note as William Lowndes Yancey of Alabama, Ethelbert Barksdale of Mississippi, and Henry B. Payne and Senator George Ellis Pugh of Ohio addressing the convention. At the end of the fifth day, the resolutions had been recommitted to the committee. On the next day, W. W. Avery of North Carolina reintroduced the majority-Southern report, almost completely unaltered, and Samuels presented and defended the almost wholly intact minority resolutions.

The principal difference in the reports lay in their recommendations on the status of slavery in the territories. The Southern members of the committee recommended:

That the platform adopted by the Democratic party at Cincinnati be affirmed, with the following explanatory resolutions: First. That the government of a territory organized by an act of Congress is provisional and temporary; and during its existence all citizens of the United States have an equal right to settle with their property in the Territory without their rights, either of person or property, being destroyed or impaired by Congressional or territorial legislation. Second. That it is the duty of the Federal Government, in all its departments, to protect when necessary the rights of persons and property in the territories and wherever else its constitutional authority extends. Third. That when the settlers in a territory having an adequate population form a state constitu-

<sup>21</sup> See Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, 288-300.



tion, the right of sovereignty commences and, being consummated by admission into the Union, they stand on an equal footing with the people of other states; and the state thus organized ought to be admitted into the Federal Union, whether its constitution recognizes or prohibits the institution of slavery.<sup>22</sup>

The minority pro-Douglas report, as read by Samuels, recommended:

That we, the Democracy of the Union, in convention assembled, hereby declare our affirmance of the resolutions unanimously adopted and declared as a platform of principles by the Democratic Convention at Cincinnati in the year 1856, believing that Democratic principles are unchangeable in their nature, when applied to the same subject matters; and we recommend as the only further resolution the following: Inasmuch as differences of opinion exist in the Democratic party as to the nature and extent of the powers of a territorial legislature, and as to the powers and duties of Congress under the Constitution of the United States over the institution of slavery within the territories:

*Resolved*, That the Democratic party will abide by the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States on the questions of constitutional law.<sup>23</sup>

The over-all pattern of Samuels' speech in defense of the minority resolutions was inductive. He argued that for three reasons the minority report should be adopted in preference to the majority report. He held that the arguments advanced in favor of the majority report were inconsistent and contradictory; that adoption of the majority report would be injurious to the Democratic party in the North and of no material benefit to the South; and that adoption of the minority report would benefit both sections.

His refutation of the arguments advanced in favor of the majority report was accomplished principally by pointing out inconsistencies in the arguments of the opposition. He refuted the charge that the North had refused to surrender its position because of stubbornness by "turning the tables" and suggesting that Southerners had been equally adamant in their own way. He then reaffirmed the Northern stand and argued that Northern Democrats felt that they could not relinquish what were to them fundamental principles. *Reductio ad absurdum* was the weapon employed by Samuels

<sup>22</sup> Charleston *Mercury*, April 29, 1860; *Charleston Democratic Papers*, Duke University Library, Durham, N. C.; Murat Halstead, *Caucuses of 1860* (Columbus, 1860), 54-5.

<sup>23</sup> Charleston *Mercury*, April 29, 1860; *Charleston Democratic Papers*, Halstead, *Caucuses of 1860*, 54-5.

in attacking the arguments of the eloquent Yancey. He pointed out that it would seem that the Alabamian declared: "We stand by a principle; we ask for the right; you do not; you have nothing to lose; let us compromise this matter; let us settle it; come over to us and you will then be right." "The most remarkable compromise I have every heard in my life!" observed Samuels.<sup>24</sup> A third major Southern argument, the claim that the Dred Scott decision had already determined the status of slavery in the territories, Samuels attempted to refute by setting up a dilemma. He argued: "But gentlemen announce to us that this is a matter already judicially determined. Upon that proposition we take issue with them and deny that it is a judicial determination. But if judicially determined already, I then ask what have you to lose by the resolutions which we offer?"<sup>25</sup>

Samuels' main constructive arguments — that the majority resolutions would injure the Democratic party in the North without benefiting Southern Democrats, and that adoption of the minority report would result in advantages to both sections — undoubtedly were influenced by his Midwestern environment. Having several times tasted the dregs of defeat at the polls in his home state, he was keenly aware of the dangers of Republicanism. Samuels' concern over the growing strength of Republican sentiment was clearly brought out in a passage of his speech to the convention wherein several Northern Democrats — A. C. Dodge of Iowa, Pugh of Ohio, Charles E. Stuart of Michigan, and William A. Richardson of Illinois — were singled out as examples of men whose political fortunes were being seriously threatened by Southern dominance in the party. On the other hand, he believed that Northern Democrats, if allowed to run on a suitable platform, could achieve victories. In support of this contention, he cited examples of Democratic successes achieved in three Northern states — Wisconsin, Connecticut, and Rhode Island — under the banner of popular sovereignty. Samuels' argument essentially was very simple and practical. He contended that the party had a choice between the election of Black Republicans, if the South continued to insist upon abstractions, or the glorious triumph of the Democracy under the aegis of popular sovereignty. There was no merit in contending for a principle if it meant that the Republicans would win control of the government.

The effectiveness of Samuels' argument probably was considerably dimin-

<sup>24</sup> Charleston *Mercury*, April 29, 1860.

<sup>25</sup> *Idem*.

ished, however, because of his inability to offer doubting Southerners assurance that the Democrats would win in the North on a Douglas platform. His few scattered examples of Democratic victories in Northern areas were isolated instances and probably were recognized as such by many Southerners. Samuels' failure to appreciate the concrete and tangible importance to the Southerner of Congressional protection of slavery in the territories probably further impaired his argument. Southerners were fighting to retain control of the Democratic party and, through it, the government, as well as a way of life.

Emotionally, Samuels' speech was strong. The tone throughout was that of a grieved man appealing to his Southern brethren for the right to fight the foe. He asked for Southern sympathy for the many Northern Democrats who had gone down to defeat in defense of Southern rights. He sought to reassure the South of the friendship of the Northern Democracy and to strengthen the bonds of affection between the two sections. He pleaded with the South, as one who has known the perils of conflict, to prevent the triumph of "the serpents of Black Republicanism that have by their breathing affected the air and by their slime tracked the earth." He appealed to the patriotism and loyalty of Southerners: "Oh, Gentlemen, I beseech you, as you love your country, and as you respect your friends, fetter us not in this hour — for fetters are fatal to us." In highly emotional language he described the fight of Northern Democrats against Republicanism:

Steady, incessant, vigilant, we have been battling it, gradually forcing it back, breaking its columns; and now when its battalions are reeling — when it is in the agonies of death — when its strength is all gone — when the power is in our hands to take it by the throat and strangle it to death — are our Southern friends to come up and hold our arms? . . . We shrink not from peril. We are ready to assume the full responsibility of the position and we ask you to assign it to us. I care not though Republicans were entrenched in a hold stronger than Sebastopol itself — by the energy, the power, the might of the united Northern Democracy, their fortress will be stormed, their guns will be turned against themselves, and one banner shall be victorious.<sup>26</sup>

Although Samuels' language may seem ostentatious and excessive to modern readers, this florid style was not out of place in 1860 and probably was quite effective in the highly inflammatory setting at Charleston.

<sup>26</sup> *Idem*.



Samuels' awareness of his audience and the prejudices of the Southern delegates is revealed throughout the speech. In response to these feelings, Samuels seems to have made an effort to overcome the biases of his Southern listeners and to establish himself as a man of good character and good will. Frequent quotation of Southern leaders — R. M. T. Hunter and Henry Wise of Virginia, and Howell Cobb of Georgia — appears to have been designed to bridge the gap between the sections. He referred to his birthplace and early education, probably to aid him in winning adherents, and mentioned that although a citizen of the North, he was a "native of the South" and "educated in the school of Virginia politics." He sought to reveal humility: "I do not claim to be more candid than other men, but I do claim to be a plain man who will speak the truth plainly."<sup>27</sup> All of these ethical appeals were directed to the Southerners in the audience.

The immediate surface response would indicate that this was a highly successful speech. The *Charleston Mercury* reported that the speech was interrupted eighteen times by cheering and applause. The *New York Times* reporter called it "a powerful, earnest and effective appeal, free from all bitterness, and was listened to with the most marked interest and attention by the Southern members." Iowa newspapers, all of which probably obtained their reports through eastern papers, carried the following accounts of the address: "It is well worthy an attentive perusal, and no man who reads it can fail to see and appreciate the patriotism and ability of the speaker. It commanded the closest attention of the Convention during its delivery and elicited the warmest praise from men of every section," and "Its delivery by Mr. Samuels stamped him as one of the most talented and able statesmen of the great Northwest." Murat Halstead, *Cincinnati* reporter, was unimpressed, however, and termed it a "pompous stump speech." Since this was Samuels' only important address in the convention, perhaps James G. Blaine's observation that the triumph of the Douglas forces was "skillfully accomplished under the lead of Henry B. Payne, of Ohio, and Benjamin Samuels, of Iowa" gives us some insight into its consequences.<sup>28</sup>

While the speech was considered an immediate success and a triumph for the Douglas faction, Northerners did not succeed in winning over the

<sup>27</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>28</sup> *Charleston Mercury*, April 29, 1860; *New York Times*, April 30, 1860; *Oskaloosa Times*, May 17, 24, 1860; Halstead, *Caucuses of 1860*, 56; James G. Blaine, *Twenty Years of Congress* (2 vols., Norwich, Conn., 1884-1886), 1:162.



South. The Northern men succeeded in getting the minority plank inserted in the platform, a victory which resulted in the bolting of the Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, Florida, and Texas delegations. To allow tempers to cool, the remainder of the convention adjourned for six weeks, to meet again in Baltimore in mid-June. Tempers had not cooled, however; at Baltimore Douglas and anti-Douglas Democrats came to an impasse. Again a split took place. Douglas was nominated by the remainder of the original convention—including the votes of Samuels and the Iowa delegation—while the bolters nominated John C. Breckinridge. "Thus was completed the destruction of the national party of Jefferson and Jackson."<sup>29</sup>

The Democratic defeat at the polls in 1860 led to a further "bolt," this time through the portals of the Union. In view of these subsequent events, can Samuels' speech truly be considered successful? It would seem that, like the actions of many of the Northern delegates, Samuels' speech did as much to widen the breach between the sections as it did to create unity. As a later speech made by Samuels to the citizens of Dubuque upon his return to Iowa suggests, the Iowan entered the fray in a spirit of hostility rather than cooperativeness. His claim that the Northern delegates had stood firm, "determined not to yield to the demands of those who, from hostility to the Union or malignant hatred of Stephen A. Douglas, resorted to every means in their power to destroy the Democratic organization by hoisting upon it a platform which would be repudiated at home" tends to support this.<sup>30</sup> Samuels was no longer a Southerner at heart. His interests and political career were inseparably bound with the destiny of the new West. In his thirteen-year absence from Virginia, Samuels had become the advocate of a new way of life. The West had won another convert.

One can only speculate on what might have been Samuels' political fame and success had he lived longer; unfortunately his career ended shortly after his appearance at Charleston. Following the final disruption of the Democracy at Baltimore in May, Samuels, in response to invitations from Democratic committees, gave addresses in Portland, Maine, and at Faneuil Hall, in Boston. Back in Iowa he campaigned for a seat in Congress and lost by about nine thousand votes. Consumption led to his death on August 16, 1863, at the age of forty-one.

<sup>29</sup> Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy*, 320.

<sup>30</sup> Dubuque *Herald*, May 5, 1860.

## DOCUMENTS

### THE CIVIL WAR DIARY OF C. F. BOYD, FIFTEENTH IOWA INFANTRY

#### Part III\*

*Edited by Mildred Throne*

[Iuka, Mississippi]

Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> [1862] Weather hot. Went out to some Rebel Camps to-day and brought in a lot of Tents which we needed very much. The 37<sup>th</sup> Ala must have lost all their camp equipage as we found everything in good shape and took it for the use of the "Yanks." Have put up our tents down in a low bottom on the north side of the Railroad and in a most unhealthy place. The green-flies are so thick here that the earth can scarcely be seen in many spots and they hang in the bushes like bees in swarming time.

Sept 29<sup>th</sup> Since the 22<sup>d</sup> nothing of note has transpired. The weather continues hot. With one or two others I went to look at the battle-field. Where the enemy cut through our lines there has been most severe fighting. I have never seen before evidence of such a desperate contest on a small piece of ground. The fight was for the possession of a field battery and was on the crest of a hill in the timber. The trees around are almost torn to kindling wood by the dreadful fire of the Artillery and Musketry. 25 dead horses lay close together and about 40 men belonging to the 5<sup>th</sup> Iowa Inf't buried in *one grave* here. Besides numerous other graves scattered all through the woods. Many of the 17<sup>th</sup> Iowa were killed<sup>1</sup>. Saw many of the enemies dead lying around not more than half covered. The ground in many places was *white* as snow with *creeping worms*. The darkness of the forest and the terrible mortality made it one of the most *horrible* places I was ever in. Then the *silence* was oppressive. Not a sound could be heard.

\*Parts I and II appeared in the January and April, 1952, issues of the JOURNAL. Part II closed with the Battle of Iuka, September 19, 1862.

<sup>1</sup> Iowa losses were heavy at Iuka. The 5<sup>th</sup> Iowa lost 217 killed, wounded, and missing or captured; the 10<sup>th</sup> lost 7; the 16<sup>th</sup>, 75; the 17<sup>th</sup>, 46; and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry, 6. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* . . ., Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 78. (Hereafter referred to as *Official Records*.)

except once in a while the chirp of some lonely bird in the deep forest To think of our poor fellows left to sleep in that dark wood (But one must not think of such things) . . .

*Forced march to Corinth Mississippi*

Oct 1st We were called up at 11 oclock last night and ordered to be ready to march immediately<sup>2</sup> Got ready but did not start until daylight Came 20 miles to-day and within 6 miles of Corinth Cathcart received his commission yesterday and to-day took his place in the Company as 2d Lieut Our men set fire to all the houses along the line of march to-day I think this is wrong and should [be] stoped at once

Oct 2d Arrived in Corinth about 10 o'clock. Went two miles west of town and camped. . . . Corinth is well fortified now and is surrounded by forts and abatis or fallen timber along all the roads.

*Battle of Corinth Miss<sup>3</sup>*

Oct 3d At break of day we were called up by the drums and fell into Companies thinking that the weather was hot we were going out to drill before breakfast as had been our habit in hot weather With the whole Brigade we marched North about one mile through the woods. Were arranged in line of battle and stacked arms and while here a detail went back to camp and brought up some breakfast About 9 oclock rumor came that Price and Van Dorn were marching on Corinth and we should perhaps have a fight But few believed the story. By 10 o'clock the sound of artillery and musketry could be heard to the west about as far away as Chewalla The noise of the guns became nearer and by 1 o'clock we could see masses of the enemy marching along the Memphis and Charleston Railroad to the west The troops in front of us kept falling back and finally took

<sup>2</sup> Since the retreat of Confederate General Sterling Price from Iuka to Baldwyn, Mississippi, he and Major-General Earl Van Dorn had been gathering their troops for an assault on Grant's position at Corinth. "By the 1st of October it was fully apparent that Corinth was to be attacked with great force and determination, and that Van Dorn, Lovell, Price, Villepique and Rust had joined their strength for this purpose." *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant* (2 vols., New York, 1885), 1:415-16. According to Sherman, Grant had only about 50,000 men under him at this time, "to defend a frontage of a hundred and fifty miles, guard some two hundred miles of railway, and as much river." On the other side, Van Dorn had 40,000 men, could concentrate them at any point on Grant's long line, and attack through country they knew well. *Memoirs of Gen. W. T. Sherman* . . . (2 vols., New York, 1891), 1:290.

<sup>3</sup> For William W. Belknap's and Marcellus M. Crocker's accounts of the 15th Iowa in this battle, see *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 358-62, 363-5.

position in line to our right The 11th and 13th [Iowa] were posted a little way behind us as a Reserve

We occupied a naked high ridge with nothing to protect us from the fire of the enemy About 2 oclock we could see them advancing toward our position in line of battle There were three distinct lines one behind the other and all advancing in the most deliberate manner at *bayonets fixed* We could hear the commands of the Rebel Officers distinctly, but we were cautioned "not to fire until we received orders to open" Genl Crocker and Lieut Col Belknap rode along the line and urged no man to fire until the order was given <sup>4</sup>

Our men got upon one knee and had guns all cocked and ready when the front Regiments of the enemy took deliberate aim at us and the whole line fired into us and we heard the Rebel shout and yell Then somebody commenced firing and we shot away in the smoke not knowing exactly where to aim as the enemy were in lower ground than we But their first volley laid out many a man for us Every one now took to a tree or some place to protect himself The Rebs soon closed upon us and came on with countless numbers They swarmed around on our left and fired from behind trees and logs and kept pressing forward Our ranks became much confused and the regiments held as a Reserve fell back toward our Camp without helping us any

The battle raged fiercely for a time and men fell in great numbers Middlesworth the 1st Corporal in our company stood at my left hand and a ball struck him in the abdomen and he fell with a groan — Corp Heatley fell shot through the head and Lieut Cathcart fell dead at almost the first fire He had on his sword and uniform Several of our Company were wounded and the enemy closing in so rapidly the whole Regiment began to fall back not having even time to pick up the wounded but left them to their fate Just as the Regt began to break Charley Vinton came staggering along by me and asked some fellow who passed him to help him The man

<sup>4</sup> That the officers might experience the same feelings as the private soldiers would probably have surprised the men at Corinth. William W. Belknap tells a story of the battle of Corinth: "General [then Colonel] Crocker said to me at Corinth, in the very heat of the fight, as a bullet struck 'spat' on the sapling between us: 'Do you know, old fellow, what I am thinking about?' 'What, colonel?' said I. 'I wish I was back in Des Moines.' And so did I wish myself back in Keokuk." William W. Belknap, "The Obedience and Courage of the Private Soldier . . .," *War Sketches and Incidents . . . Iowa Commandery, Military Order of the Loyal Legion . . .* (2 vols., Des Moines, 1893), 1:165.



did not stop or take any notice whatever of him and I took Charley by the arm and assisted him for some distance. He was wounded not severely in the head but the blood covered him all over and he looked like one mortally wounded. I left him with a Surgeon who was trying to get some other wounded men to an ambulance.

To our left I could now see the Rebs running from tree to tree and firing rapidly while our men were doing the same but falling back toward the Camp. The tents had been lowered to the ground and the volleys of bullets did not hurt them. I could see the Rebs tearing the Sutlers tents away and going for the goods. I fired nine or ten rounds all told and by this time everything was on the *retreat* toward Corinth and the firing had almost ceased in the woods. We were outside the abatis and all the roads leading in toward Corinth were crowded with men hurrying toward the town. When we reached the timber inside the abatis it was almost sun-down. Here we formed another line of battle and under cover of Fort Williams<sup>5</sup> The men kept straggling in for an hour and some did not come in at all. Sam Roberts, Henry Hooten and Clark were missing and must have been taken prisoners. Here we lie, on our arms for the night under a clear sky.

Oct 4th The enemy could be heard all night bringing up his artillery and the rolling of wheels and the commands of the officers could be distinctly heard. A little before daylight a Rebel shell came from a gun in the edge of the wood and went over into the town—another soon followed and soon the cannonade opened in good earnest. Our Fort opened on a Rebel battery and soon silenced its fire. Several shells came over to wake us up and a number of men in the 11th Iowa just in rear of us were wounded.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Corinth was surrounded by six outer batteries, numbers "A" to "F"—and by seven inner batteries or forts—Powell, Robinette, Williams, Phillips, Tannrath, Lothrop, and Madison. By the night of Oct. 3, Confederate troops had pushed in to this second line of fortifications. The 15th Iowa had been driven back from Battery F—north and west of Corinth—to Fort Phillips, not Williams, as Boyd states, although the two batteries were very close. For maps of the battle, see *Official Records*, Atlas, Vol. I, Plate XXV-1 and Plate XXIII-9, 10. A witness of the battle, writing in the *Des Moines Register*, credits Rosecrans with brilliant strategy in this retreat, whereby he brought the Confederate forces closer to the "heavy guns of the inner fortifications." *Des Moines Iowa State Register*, Oct. 29, 1862. According to Grant, Rosecrans withdrew, awaiting reinforcements which were coming from Jackson and Bolivar. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:416-17. Rosecrans' report does not give any indication of such a stratagem. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 166-70.

<sup>6</sup> A newspaper description of this artillery duel is more dramatic than Boyd's account: "Under cover of night the rebels had the temerity to plant a battery

Fort Williams contains 5, 34 and 64 pounders and she put some heavy shells over into the woods which must have made havoc among the enemy. We were warned to lie close to the ground and look out for a *charge*. Fort Robinette on our right and distant about 400 yards kept up a heavy fire upon the woods in front the enemy answering occasionally.

About 10 o'clock a heavy roll of musketry was heard to the North and looking over in front of Robinette we could see thousands of gray uniforms swarming from the woods and climbing over the fallen timber. Every one came as best he could toward the works. The cannon at Robinette poured charge after charge into their ranks but they faltered not and on they came and soon reached the work[s]. The gunners stood to their pieces and many of them *fell there*. A few ran back to the rear where the Infantry lay about 200 yards from the fort. The "Stars and bars" floated over Robinette but only for a brief time of a few seconds. The Infantry rose from their lair and with fixed and glistening bayonets and one discharge from their muskets rushed on the victorious legions [and] with a *cheer* killed or captured all that were left. No sooner had the smoke cleared away than the second assaulting force emerged from the woods and bore down on Robinette with the most *terrific yells*. The guns from the fort loaded with grape and canister mowed them down by hundreds. But when the advance had almost reached the fort the gunners this time abandoned their pieces and ran back to the Infantry. The Rebs headed by an officer who had come up a winding road on horseback now reached the redoubt and began climbing over its walls and some ran around the embankment and got possession of the guns and had them *turned* on our men when a long *blue* line of uniforms could be seen rising out of the grass and bushes and with a *cheer* rushed on the victorious enemy. Muskets were clubbed and many were killed with the bayonet. The ranks of the rebels melted like snow and most of them stood their ground and died in and around the little fort.

within 200 yards of the west redoubt; and at 3½ A. M. commenced shelling the town. This discovered their position and then began one of the most splendid artillery duels ever witnessed. Every gun that could get range opened its heavy bay on the devoted little battery. The terrific thunder of the artillery shook the whole surrounding country. No words of mine can describe the awful grandeur of the scene, as the crashing solid shot and screaming shells went flying through the air. This cannonading lasted until daybreak, when a sortie was made from the redoubt and the artillery dragged back in triumph. All this time we lay flat on our faces and were scarcely allowed to move. An awful stillness succeeded this cannonade; for more than hour not a sound was heard." Letter from R. K. Miller in Des Moines Iowa State Register, Oct. 29, 1862.

It was a bloody contest and we could see men using their bayonets like pitch forks, and thrusting each other through. How glorious the old flag looked as it again floated over the works in the smoke and breath of battle.

Finally those of the enemy who did not fall or surrender started for the woods across the abatis or by the meandering roads for the shelter of the timber. It was every fellow for himself and the "devil take the hindmost." No description is adequate to picture the gauntlet of death that these fugitives ran. Very few reached the timber *alive*. Robinette belched forth her fearful burden of shell and grape in their rear and our fort threw in a flanking fire of heavy shell while a field battery between us and Robinette raked the bal[ance] of the ground and the Infantry poured after them a deadly rain of musket balls.

With no guns and coats and hats gone I saw a scattering few reach the timber and escape from the "jaws of death." Although they are enemies of our government and our flag I could not help but pity these poor fellows who thus went into *certain and sure destruction* here. When the smoke had cleared away we learned that the enemy had fled in confusion. They had been *cut to pieces* in the most intense meaning of that term. Such bravery has never been excelled on any field as the useless assaults on Robinette.<sup>7</sup> The prisoners tell us that Van Dorn commanded and that he was *drunk* and ordered his men to drink whiskey and *gun powder* and then ordered them to take the works at any cost *however great*.<sup>8</sup>

In front of Robinette lie hundreds of dead. 126 dead men lie within 40 feet of the fort. Most of them are in the ditch surrounding. One dead man

<sup>7</sup> Admiration for the fighting qualities of the Confederates was general, from Grant to the privates of the Union army. The "gallantry" of the troops under Price was commented on in practically every report. "Let no intelligent man call the rebels cowards. In the engagement they displayed a desperate courage seldom equalled and never surpassed. For a battalion to rush upon a redoubt filled with blazing-throated artillery and planting the flag, hold it there till riddled by a thousand balls, while double charged field pieces from our center hurled canister and death into their right flank, is worthy to be compared with any charge recorded in history." Letter from R. K. Miller in *Des Moines Iowa State Register*, Oct. 29, 1862. Of the first charge, on October 3, a member of the 17th Iowa wrote: "An involuntary acclamation of admiration burst from our entire Brigade on beholding the gallantry and daring of the [Confederate] charge." *Keokuk Gate City*, Oct. 15, 1862.

<sup>8</sup> Van Dorn was tried by a Confederate Court of Inquiry at Jackson, Mississippi, on November 7, 1862, charged with drunkenness and neglect of duty at the Battle of Corinth. The Court found him innocent of the many charges against him. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 414-59.



lies just on the slope of the work stiff in death with a hammer in one hand and a lot of *rat tail files* in the other His mission had been to *spike the cannon* They are so tightly gripped that the fingers can scarcely be opened Several others I saw with their muskets *gripped* in their dead hands as tight as a vise could hold Thus they perished with the most unearthly look on their dying faces Col Rogers of a Texas Regt who led the charge lies dead with his slain horse within a few feet of the fort and his Adjt only a few yards from him All around them were heaps of slain — principally Texas and Arkansas men

Price, Van Dorn, Villepique and all the transmissipi troops were here and it was one last desperate effort to retrieve their losses in the Mississippi Valley But this is the worst set back they have met. . . .

Have orders to be ready to march at daylight tomorrow morning Genl Rosecrans our commanding General came around this eve and was almost taken from his horse by the soldiers The *wildest enthusiasm* prevailed and every man seems ready to pursue the enemy We have had but few battles so well managed as old "Rosa" has managed this one

The dead have been burried this eve and we did not even get to see those of our Regiment as details from other Regiments burried them Some of the enemy penetrated into the town and more than 100 were captured in the *bakeries* and *stores* We are tired and hungry to-night and the excitement and fatigue of the two days battle and its glorious termination entitles us to a *rest*

Oct 5th Sunday. Started toward Chewalla early this morning in pursuit of the flying enemy The roadside for miles was lined with abandoned wagons [and] dead and wounded Rebs who had been left in the *retreat* of yesterday Saw sixteen dead in one place They lay like sheaves of grain ready to be shocked and all along the road we found them The panic has been an awful one Went six miles and formed in line of battle and here we remained two hours Genl McArthur commands<sup>9</sup> Finally started on and came within two miles of the Tuscumbia River and on the same road which brought us to and from Bolivar Here we bivouacked

Oct 6th Started early and crossed the Tuscumbia and went South We soon began to see more signs of the *rout* The hills were steep and wagons

<sup>9</sup> Brig.-Gen. John McArthur succeeded Brig.-Gen. Thomas J. McKean in command of the 6th Division of the Army of the Tennessee. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, 11: 551-2; *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 345, 361.



had struck trees and rolled over and over. Some had been loaded with Corn meal and some with flour and others with cooking utensils and all kinds of stuff was scattered like some great whirlwind had overtaken the retreating army. Artillery caissons had struck trees and the ammunition had exploded tearing everything to pieces around. Many places the cannoniers had cut the *traces* and gone leaving their load behind. The hillsides were white with corn meal and flour and the dust in the road fully one foot deep<sup>10</sup>. Thus for several miles it went. We found Genl Price's *buggy* with a fine Robe in it. But the owner had *gone on*. All along the roadside under the bushes in the hollows and behind logs the panting fugitives were found Glad to surrender. Glad to do anything to save all they had *left* and that was their *lives*. They all agreed in saying that no such *terrible* calamity had ever overtaken [them] in the west as the battle of the 4th.

Hurlbut had come down on them at the Hatchie<sup>11</sup> and used them up badly and if we had closed in on them Sunday instead of lying on our arms in the woods there would not have been enough left to *tell the tale*<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> William H. Warren of the 13th Iowa was in the pursuit. "We followed them up on their retreat and done them greater damage they burnt a part of their train on the Tuscumbia where we were close on their heels. General Ord [General E. O. C. Ord] headed them on the Hatchie as we drove them through there and cut them up badly. The road was strued with tents waggons and clothing knapsacks sugar molasses flower and corn meal besides cooking utensils, cannon carriage and ammunition and guns. I did not see any cannon but it was reported that our scouts found ten peaces of cannon throed into a gulley one half mile off the road." Letter of October 12, 1862, Wm. H. Warren to his wife, in *Warren Letters* (typescript), State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

<sup>11</sup> Maj.-Gen. Stephen A. Hurlbut, in command of the Fourth Division of the Army of West Tennessee, had been ordered from Bolivar to support Rosecrans at Corinth. Maj.-Gen. E. O. C. Ord "had joined Hurlbut on the 4th and being senior took command of his troops. This force encountered the head of Van Dorn's retreating column just as it was crossing the Hatchie by a bridge some ten miles out from Corinth. The bottom land here was swampy and bad for the operations of troops, making a good place to get an enemy into. Ord attacked the troops that had crossed the bridge and drove them back in a panic. Many were killed, and others were drowned by being pushed off the bridge in their hurried retreat." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:417-18. See also *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 304-335.

<sup>12</sup> "General Rosecrans . . . failed to follow up the victory, although I had given specific orders in advance of the battle for him to pursue the moment the enemy was repelled. He did not do so, and I repeated the order after the battle. . . . Rosecrans did not start in pursuit till the morning of the 5th and then took the wrong road. Moving in the enemy's country he travelled with a wagon train to carry his provisions and munitions of war. His march was therefore slower than that of the enemy, who was moving towards his supplies. Two or three hours of pursuit on the day of battle, without anything except what the men carried on

Six miles more brought us to the Hatchie River and the fleeing enemy had burned the bridge behind him and here we were compelled to stop until it is repaired

Oct 7th Crossed the Hatchie and went in after the *Secesh* But they had the start and we only once came up with their rear guard They made a show of fight and detained us an hour or two until the main force could get ahead again We captured a few prisoners. Are within two miles of Ripley to-night Weather rainy and wet

Oct 8th We have been idle all day Have been hunting sweet potatoes as these are all we have to eat besides a little fresh meat we found. . . . The inhabitants of the land have all fled and forsaken home and attachments. . . .

#### *March to Corinth Mississippi*

Oct 10th The pursuit has closed Marched toward Corinth to-day at 2 o'clock<sup>13</sup> The rain was pouring down and Co "G" was detailed as *rear guard* We had a hard time Came through Ripley a town (when the people are at home) of about 600 inhabitants The mud was deep and the wind blew cold from the North When we halted this evening the rain was pouring down and we are wet through and mud from head to foot. Are burning some chestnut rails to-night to dry our clothes

Oct 11th Had no blankets with us and we suffered much last night in the cold rain We could not sleep and had to stand up about all night around a little fire which we tried to keep alive Have reached the Hatchie and are camped on the North bank We have made good time to-day

Oct 12th Weather fine Crossed the Tuscumbia about noon Rested

their persons, would have been worth more than any pursuit commenced the next day could have possibly been. Even when he did start, if Rosecrans had followed the route taken by the enemy, he would have come upon Van Dorn in a swamp with a stream in front and Ord holding the only bridge; but he took the road leading north and towards Chewalla instead of west, and, after having marched as far as the enemy had moved to get to the Hatchie, he was as far from battle as when he started." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:416-19. "General Rosecrans had become favorably known through his operations in northern Mississippi, where he had fought successfully against the Confederate Generals Earl Van Dorn and Sterling Price. In their attack on Corinth, which Rosecrans defended, they had suffered a bloody repulse but had escaped fatal damage through Rosecrans' dilatory pursuit, for which Grant, who was in command of the district, never forgave him." Otto Eisenschiml and Ralph Newman, *The American Iliad* . . . (Indianapolis, 1947), 291.

<sup>13</sup> For Col. Crocker's account of this pursuit and return to Corinth, see *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 361-2.

half an hour and came on towards Corinth and reached that place about sundown Am about *pegged out* and so are all the others

*Camp at Corinth Mississippi*

Oct 13<sup>th</sup> Have been fixing camp all day Capt Hanks ordered the Company to hold an Election this eve for a Lieut in place of Cathcart killed and also for 1st Sergt I was *nominated* and received the *unanimous* vote of the Co for Lieut not one dissenting voice Dan Embree had 8 majority for 1st sergt against Isaiah Welch. . . .

Oct 16<sup>th</sup> This has been the most unhappy day of my whole life This morning Capt Hanks pale and trembling in every limb called me to his tent and said he had some bad news for me. That Col Reid had for some cause refused to sign a recommendation for me for Lieut and that he had advised Gov Kirkwood of Iowa to appoint E P Bye of Co "G" — a man who has made it his business to *bake pies* and sell them through the camp and *shin-need* around more than any man in the Co and this too without saying anything to the Company and against all their wishes A *thunderbolt* could not have shocked me more than this news I was completely *stupefied* for a moment and could not believe this could be *true* But when I remembered the man Cunningham and that he was now Major and in close communication with Col Reid I saw through the whole *conspiracy* Co "G" are if anything more excited and indignant than I am and they stand by me to a man and swear they will stay by me to the *end* That they voted for me for Lieut and no other man can or shall have the place Even old uncle Johny Cozad is up and has his bristles elevated and says that the man that takes this place against the wishes of the Company will have a hard road to *travel* Capt Rogers Co "E" told me this eve to fight it out and that Co "E" would stand by us.

Oct 17<sup>th</sup> . . . The boys talk trouble if the *pie peddler* is made Lieut

Oct 18<sup>th</sup> To-day I went to see Col Reid and to ask him *why* he had treated me as I have *heard* Reid said I had always been faithful and had done well But in this case his reason for not recommending me for Lieut was that some one had told him that I had assisted a wounded man in getting off the field in the late battle and said I should have known that this was against *orders* and knowing that I had been guilty of disobedience and he could not do otherwise than he had Was *very sorry* &c &c To say that I was *angry* will not express by feelings and I left the old *liar* and *tyrant* and went straight to the tent of Major Belknap (or Lieut Col) and told him



plainly all about the whole affair and he said if there was anything in the world he could do for me he would cheerfully do it and it was a piece of *gross injustice* and he wanted to know who this man "Bye" was I told him that he was a *pie Peddler* in Co "G"

I find that I have the sympathy of about every man in Regt and their good will too, and especially of Co "G" and this is better than to be Col and be *hated* and *despised* as our Col is As mean and tyrannical as he is I shall get *even* with him before I leave the service I never *cared* much about a Commission until *now* but now I shall have one cost what it may and I shall give Mr "Bye" as *thorny* a road to travel as he has ever seen My influence with the men to-day is twice or ten times that of Hanks or any other Commissioned Officer and Hanks *Knows* it.

Oct 19th Sunday . . . The boys are jubilant this eve as we have heard that Lieut Fisk is released as a prisoner and will soon be with us again The enemy *lost* 2000 killed and wounded in the late battle and our loss about 700<sup>14</sup> Price is said to be concentrating again at Holly Springs with a large army

Have been in the service just *one year* to-day I thank God for all I have enjoyed and the preservation of my life and also for all the hardships and the *disappointments* I have met. If I had received the Commission and been in poor Cathcart's place it might have been far different on this 1st anniversary. . . .

Oct 21st No passes were granted to-day as the officers are afraid the men will enlist in the Regular Army and leave the Volunteers They have a recruiting sta[tion] in town They need not fear to let *me go*

Oct 22d Capt Hanks tells me this eve that he feels certain I will yet be 1st Lieut I guess this is only to let me *down gradually* . . .

Are ordered to prepare for Review which will be 1½ miles East of Corinth We marched out through a cloud of dust and when we got to the ground we fronted and ordered arms — then shouldered arms opened ranks — Then Genl McArthur and staff approached our right from the front and rode along the line at a brisk trot; then down our rear — then he and his escort took a position 200 yards in front and we were wheeled into Column

<sup>14</sup> The losses in the Battle of Corinth, according to the official records, were 2,520 Union men, killed, wounded, or missing; 2,527 Confederate. *Ibid.*, 176, 383. General Sherman questioned this Confederate figure, claiming that their loss must have been at least 6,000. Sherman, *Memoirs* . . ., 291.



and marched in Review in front of the General and around again to our former position — wheeled from a halt into line again and marched to Camp The dust was awful and our eyes and ears were filled These Reviews are the greatest *bore* of the service There is no end to preparation and everything must be *just so* But the reviewing officer sees nothing but the general appearance of the men and hundreds pass in review before him in a few minutes But it keeps mens minds employed and takes their thoughts from something else I am not feeling well this eve.

Oct 23d . . . Rumor says Price is gathering an army at Holly Springs and will perhaps try us again at Corinth He will be warmly received if he calls here again Bragg has escaped from Buell in Kentucky and is retreating South<sup>15</sup> The times look dark and gloomy and there are no signs of peace on the red sky of War . . .

Oct 26th Sunday. This morning the *snow* covered the ground *one inch* deep and it was very cold indeed About noon the sun thawed the snow off. Some one stole the blanket off Major Cunninghams horse last night and to-day he is hunting for it and says if he can find the man he will have him *severely punished* (I think the man is in Co “G” and one of the B. boys said to me to-day or rather asked me if I thought a soldier was as good as an Officers “horse” I told him I thought it was *doubtful*)

Oct 27th Weather cool but the day fine to work Every able bodied man in our Regt has been to work on the fortifications to-day The defences around Corinth are of the most formidable character . . .

Oct 29th . . . Price is reported going south, going north, going East, going in all directions . . .

Oct 31st Had Division Review about one mile southwest. Was not well enough to attend Afternoon was Muster and all had to attend This barbarous way of living I do not like Have 3 sad biscuit at a meal — a little fat bacon and coffee Three of us eat on two plates with one spoon and one knife (a shoe knife) and a sharp stick for a fork We wash our plates about once a week We can hardly get water to cook and wash our faces Every one but the Brigadiers and Major Generals are getting *tired* of the war which now looks like it would end like the Kilkeny cat fight — nothing left but the *tails* . . .

<sup>15</sup> This was the battle of Perryville or Chaplin Hills in Kentucky, on October 8, 1862. *Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan* . . . (2 vols., New York, 1888), 1:190ff; *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVI, Part I, 1021–1135.

*March to Holly Springs Mississippi*

*Nov 2d Sunday.* Received orders last evening to be ready to March tomorrow morning with seven days Rations<sup>16</sup> We did not get started until 3 oclock this afternoon Took the Road towards Bolivar and did not stop until 1 oclock at night and three miles from Tuscumbia River I gave out this evening and had to fall out of ranks but caught up again a few minutes after the Regt halted We made some coffee and with one blanket we laid down on the cold frosty ground Many men gave out and went back to Camp

*Nov 3d* Started at 7 o'clock this morning and kept steadily on until night I gave out about 4 oclock in the evening. I laid down to rest in a fence corner when Qr Master Higley rode along and saw me and told me to get in one of his wagons — I declined with thanks Capt Hanks was sick and rode in an Ambulance

*Nov 4th* Weather clear and warm and awful dusty By advice of the Dr I rode in ambulance until we came to Grand Junction Got out and marched two miles and camped on a hillside close to Davis Creek More men were run down to-night than I ever saw Stragglers burned vacant houses fences cotton mills and almost everything along the road and our track was visible for miles upon miles by the great mountains of smoke that rolled up from our rear These scalawags and stragglers who fire buildings and burn property unauthorized should be punished with death This evening there was an order to have Roll Call half an hour after going into Camp and all absentees to be put on extra duty if privates and if Non-Commissioned Officers to be reduced to the ranks

The country passed over to-day was the best we have seen in Tennessee We are 48 miles from Corinth Troops are coming in here from Bolivar and Jackson and there seems to be concentrating here a large Army

<sup>16</sup> This, according to Grant, was the beginning of the campaign against Vicksburg. Grant was then at his headquarters at Jackson, Tenn., north of Corinth. Holly Springs, his first objective, was west and a little south of Corinth. Union forces held the Mississippi above Memphis, and at New Orleans at its mouth. Vicksburg and Port Hudson were the last Confederate bastions on the river. It would take eight months of bitter fighting and stubborn siege before Vicksburg fell to Grant on July 4, 1863. See Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:422-570; for the 11th Iowa in this campaign, see Olynthus B. Clark (ed.), *Downing's Civil War Diary . . .* (Des Moines, 1916), 80-126; Henry Steele Commager (ed.), *The Blue and the Gray . . .* (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1950), 2:645-84 for personal accounts of the siege. See also *Memoirs of Gen. W. T. Sherman . . .*, 1:332-71.

*Grand Junction Tennessee*

*Nov 5th* Have been in camp all day. Foraging parties have been out and brought in sweet potatoes &c . . .

*Nov 7th* Genl Grant who commands has issued an order punishing with *death* any man who burns a building without authority and the cartridges [sic] in our boxes to be *counted* every day and men to be charged 50 cts a piece for all lost or destroyed This latter is to stop the shooting along the road of march . . .

*Nov 9th Sunday:* Moved camp last evening down on a low flat bottom along the creek A reconnoitering force went south to-day and had a skirmish at Cold Water in which some few men were killed and wounded

*Nov 10th* Weather good. A foraging party went out to-day and brought in 25 bushels of sweet potatoes, 14 sheep and 12 Hogs . . .

*Nov 12th* Bye received his commission to-day as Lieut I did not *swear* but Co "G" did that part of it for me He takes his position under peculiar circumstances and he will not see much comfort if he does make more than he did baking *pies* to sell

*Nov 13th* Several of our men came to the Regiment to-day via Bolivar Our Cavalry are reported in possession of Holly Springs<sup>17</sup>

*Nov 14th* . . . Preparations seem to be making for a forward movement Our teams took out a foraging party to-day and brought in 12 hogs and 14 beeves We are allowed 6 teams to the Regiment now We have to abandon much stuff which we have carried along heretofore and will enable us to follow the "*Confeds*" much more rapidly than formerly and if we have to run back we can also make *better time* and [not] lose the government so much The Rebel forces are somewhere south of Holly Springs location unknown It is common *talk* that Genl McArthur was *drunk* as a fool the night we came here and that he fell off his horse If true this is a disgrace and a shame

*Nov 15th* This war is getting to be a stupendous humbug The western army has done all that has been accomplished so far and if no better generals can be found than McClellan and some others there will no victories in the East soon . . . We drew 7 days Rations to-day of hard-tack, bacon,

<sup>17</sup> Colonel Albert L. Lee, 7th Kans. Cavalry, entered Holly Springs at daylight on November 13. He found "a considerable force of cavalry, but they skedaddled." *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 488.



sugar, coffee soap candles salt and a few Irish potatoes A band across the creek plays some beautiful music . . .

*Nov 17th* Last night the rain fell gently and to-day the ground is very muddy and our camp is quite damp to-night and the rain still patters upon the little tent Teams sent out brought in 18 bushels of sweet potatoes and 4 hogs We have eat out clean about one county since we came here and will soon have to move to new pastures Private foraging is not allowed but Qr Masters can take anything and give a receipt therefor and when the war is over if the claimant can prove himself a Union man he will be paid for the property None of them will get anything as the inhabitants are all disunion men. They have forsaken wives and children and cotton plantations and gone after Jeff Davis and his "Confederacy" The country thus far that we have seen is not worth one drop of Yankee blood

*Nov 18th* The water in the creek and out of which we have to cook and use is getting filthy The 16th Ia is camped just above us on the stream and are the nearest to *swine* of anything we have seen to be called men We have Dress Parade every eve

*Nov 19th* Last night the rain poured down and flooded our camp and about drowned us out, wetting our clothes and blankets. To day we moved up on the hill on a beautiful piece of ground

*Nov 20th* Weather clear and cool Slept on the cold damp ground last night or tried to but I did not sleep much Sergt Gray went out foraging yesterday and found the country so well cleaned up that he gave up finding anything until at last he went into a house and seeing a negro woman boiling something over the fire in a large boiler he asked her what she had there Not being disposed to tell Gray took the lid off and found a fine large turkey just beginning to cook. Gray not wishing to lose any time grabbed the fowl and started on double quick for camp and the *wench* yelling after him "oh massa for de lords sake give up dat turkey" The hot water almost cooked Grays arm from the wrist to the elbow But he did not surrender and brought the fowl safely in and we had it baked in our big oven which we covered with live coals Gray says we should have heard that *wench* yell when he started off with the bird

*Nov 21st* Had Division drill to-day and were out on a large open space of ground where we had plenty of room<sup>18</sup> The last movement we went

<sup>18</sup> "From the 20th to the 28th, division drill of the three brigades and battalion drill, alternately, were the order of the day, General McArthur commanding the



through was a grand charge down a long slope Charged down and many men fell *down* and were *run over* Where we started could be seen thousands of camp fires and a long sweeping view for miles North and South and bounded on the west by a long strip of timber We trod down a large field of cotton just white and ready for the pickers<sup>19</sup>

*Nov 22d* Weather still fine Had Division drill commencing at 9 o'clock and lasted until noon and the officers took half an hour to go to camp to get their regular bitters Co "G" and "A" were deployed as skirmishers and we charged down the slope and went about one mile and a half on the double quick. Most of us gave out by this time Genl McArthur led a Cavalry charge. He is a fine horseman and rides a beautiful bay horse The General wears a scotch cap or turban which has two little black streamers flying behind McArthur has a pug nose and is a heavy set and hardy looking man and is an Illinois soldier

*Nov 23d Sunday:* Weather fine and clear Inspection to-day of Division teams and wagons. . . . Harv M Reid refused to go on duty and I sent him to the guard house

I called E P Bye into my tent to-day and told [him] *never* while he was in Co "G" to give me an order as I should never obey him and that I considered him a *sneaking puppy* and that [I] might consider his *hide* worth just about *ten cents* in good currency He protested that he had not wanted the office of Lieut and that he intended to *resign* right away I gave him notice that this was the last I should ever have to say or do with him and

drill of the division personally. This was the first instance of the division being practically instructed in the different movements incident to brigade in line of battle by division. . . . This practical instruction of the troops in movements of every day occurrence, while engaged with the enemy, was heretofore greatly needed, and was of the greatest practical benefit to officers and men." *History of the Fifteenth Regiment, Iowa Veteran Volunteer Infantry* . . . (Keokuk, 1887), 233.

<sup>19</sup> W. L. Watson of the 15th Iowa wrote to the Keokuk *Gate City* on Nov. 21, 1862, describing these maneuvers: "Yesterday our division was out on drill. The 1st and 2d brigades were formed in line of battle in the front, while our brigade, the third, was formed in close column by division in their rear. We changed front and fell in our former position. Skirmishers were then thrown out, and away we went over fences and ditches, through cotton fields and corn fields for some distance, when we again fell back to our former position—the 15th and 16th being ordered in front to charge bayonets. The commands were given, 'Charge bayonets! double quick, march!' Away we went hopping and yelling for about two hundred yards, when we heard the commands, 'Halt! center dress!' The line was soon formed, when the General's aid came up to our Major, telling him the General was highly pleased with the charge, and saying that a better charge never was made." *Keokuk Gate City*, Dec. 3, 1862.

that my opinion of him was just the opinion of the whole Company and knowing the feeling toward himself and how he had obtained the office he was *most welcome* to all he had got thus far. . . .

Nov 25th Cannot get more than 2/3 enough to eat now. The Regulations do not provide for such appetites as we have Had Co drill in forenoon and Bat drill in afternoon Cunningham drilled in latter The Regulations do not *prohibit* him from knowing more than he does

Nov 26th Weather fine. Co on Picket  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from Camp Drew 5 days Rations Orders are to take the names of all men too sick to travel Rumor says we will march soon About all our tents were taken from us this evening which left some of us out of *doors*

Nov 27th Last night was cold and frosty Eight of us slept under one old tent and with a big log fire at our feet we slept quite well. This morn- ing the Devil entered into (not the swine) Co "A" and most of them being from the "swate emerald Isle" with the help of a half barrel of whiskey managed to give the officers and all the help they could command about all they could do They had been at "Headquarters" on guard and thinking some time in the night that Genl McArthur did not *need* all the whiskey around there they undertook to *convey* a portion to their *natural canteens* but not having it watered as usual it proved too much for them and a *general row* took place Col Belknap ordered a lot of them "bucked and gagged" but that was not done Capt Whitenack finally got the worst one subdued and they at last succumbed after tearing down their tents and about all their clothes to pieces All the sick and those not able to travel were sent to La Grange to-day . . .

#### *March to Holly Springs Mississippi*

Nov 28th In accordance with orders rec'd on Dress Parade last evening we started on the march to-day with 5 days provisions<sup>20</sup> Tie Shepherd, Gray and I gave out about dark We crawled a little off the Road and made a darkey family let us into their cabin We made coffee and laid down on the floor before a big fire place and will sleep here The old

<sup>20</sup> "On November 28th, the organization of all the troops destined for the winter campaign to the rear of Vicksburg being completed, the three corps were put in motion; General Hamilton in command of the left wing, now in front; General McPherson in command of the centre, moving on a parallel road next on the right; and General W. T. Sherman, moving from Memphis southeast toward Abbeville, being the extreme right. The Sixth Division of Hamilton's corps being in the lead of the column, the 3d brigade was in front." *History of the Fifteenth Regiment, Iowa . . .*, 233.

Negro says he belongs on another plantation and is only here to see his wife — says *Mr Van Dorn* is down here a little ways with 300 000 men and *Mr Price* has 150 000 Cavalry We told him to *bush dat talk* and let a poor soldier sleep But just then a nigger baby put in its lip and that was the last we knew

Nov 29th This morning early we arose made coffee, ate breakfast and started on hoping to overtake the Regiment before they got started But we did not find the Regt until night Came on through Holly Springs a beautiful town The people there seemed very *baughty* and in a bad humor Some of the women *spit* at us and made contemptuous faces. But few men could be seen. Cavalry men guarded every street and alley and no man was allowed to disturb anything — not even to go inside a yard to get a drink of water After leaving town we kept south and rapidly gained on the Regt which had started before daylight this morning About 3 oclock we halted and Sargt Gray went into a house to get some fire to make us some coffee and as he came out an officer rode up to us and asked where we belonged and we told him Said he I'll take *care* of you and ordered us to *halt* until a *rear guard* came up While we were halting Gray did some of his *Mexican swearing* Soon the guard came and it had about 50 poor foot sore fellows and were marching them along the road while one rank of guards marched each side of them and one rank in front and one in rear and all the guards with bayonets fixed

The officer ordered us into the pen like cattle and with our heavy load we went for a mile or two The dust was so thick that the guards could not see their file leaders Gray said to me "fix your bayonet" and at the same did so himself — thus we marched about one mile when we being taken for *guards* we gave them the slip and going down close to an old mill off the line of march we kindled a fire and made some coffee and rested Overtook the Regiment about dark and found we had been reported for *promotion* to the *ranks* I took off my shoes and putting my feet in some water soaked my socks loose from my blistered feet There was blisters as large as a silver quarter on the soles of my feet and holding them up by the light I called Capt Hanks attention to them and said If I am reduced to the ranks here is the *cause* If I could have killed one or two men to-night I should have felt compensated and it seems as if nothing but some *fresh blood* would make me rest Gray says if he is reduced he will cut "old Reids' horses tails off to their ears"



*Looking for "Dad" Price Van Dorn & Co — Miss*

*Nov 30th Sunday* Feel better this morning but can hardly walk my feet are so sore The enemy are said to be a few miles ahead and fortified on the Tallahatchie River Dan Embree Thos Kerr and Wm Campbell and myself had up a small tent but this evening the wind tore it down Last night it rained about all night. We camped and several regiments went forward and we could hear heavy cannonading all day to the South<sup>21</sup> Two divisions came up to-day and more are coming from Memphis There must be at least 50,000 men in this Army Price, Van Dorn and Pemberton are ahead of us somewhere

*Dec 1st* This morning was cold and wet and we did not get out early Have been in camp all day and doing nothing But at sundown order came to march with three days Rations and before we could get ready the drums beat and we had to fall in. Some of the wagons were out foraging and we were hurried greatly News came that the Rebs were retreating from their forts on the [Tallahatchie] River Our division went ahead with our Brigade in advance We went on quick and double quick time until we got within about one mile of the River and marched by the flank into a corn field The midnight air was damp and cold and we confiscated a lot of dry rails and made a fire and laid down and tried to sleep

*Dec 2d* Reveille came this morning about 5 o'clock and we started on the march at 8 o'clock and went in a South direction Soon came to some deserted forts and strong earthworks But no enemy. Came on to the Tallahatchie river and halted one hour The Rebs had burned the Bridge and our men were constructing a temporary one which was very narrow and bad to drive upon The artillery went over with one horse at a time and the guns were run over by hand On the North bank of the River was a heavy redoubt and on the South bank a large fort capable of holding fifteen guns An abatis was around all and were intended to dispute the crossing

<sup>21</sup> This was probably noise of the skirmishes around Waterford and Lumpkin's Mills, to the south of Holly Springs, on Nov. 29-30. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 465, 491. "Next day, 29th, the march was stopped by the enemy on the high plateau at Waterford about noon; the 6th division deploying into line of battle on the north side of the Valley between Waterford and Lumpkin's mill; when soon after the skirmishers were engaged on both sides, until part of the Federal cavalry emerged from the timber nearest to the left wing, of the enemy's line; this at once compelled them to leave the ground. In their haste the enemy left over 300 boxes of tobacco in the place." *History of the Fifteenth Regiment, Iowa* . . ., 233-4.



[of] the Tallahatchie and lacked nothing but the men to defend them The Railroad bridge just above had been burned Going through a wide bottom we came to a succession of hills that were very muddy and steep We soon came to Abbeville a R. R. station Here in the midst of a cold heavy rain we halted and stacked arms and then every man made for the fences to secure wood to make a fire Some went to killing hogs and chickens and ransacking the village for food The musical notes of the porkers could be heard in all directions and the squalling of the feathered inhabitants around every lot Some were holding hogs by the tails and calling for help, and others skinning hogs, and others were hanging up hogs and all around it was a lively scene. Rebs had fired the Depot and it was filled with commissary stores But was too far gone to be saved when we arrived The town has contained say 300 inhabitants and has three or four good houses. Two wells of water and several hundred bushels of sweet potatoes were found and promptly appropriated The country around is woodland and hilly

Van Dorn has had his Headquarters here The Cavalry captured a few prisoners There has been heavy cannonading at the front We went into camp out of the rain under a lot of old stinking beef hides which kept some of the rain from us

*Camp near Abbeville Mississippi*

*Dec 3d* This morning the sky was clear and the ground covered with a light frost Found plenty of forage Dan and I found a can of butter for which we paid \$1.00 Moved this evening a little over one mile East of Abbeville and in a heavy piece of timber We are close to a fine spring of water We are waiting for supplies and repairing the Railroad

*Dec 4th* Rained about all day We now have three Sibley tents in the Company and the officers have one Wall tent Have cleaned and leveled off our Camp ground and it looks well . . .

*Dec 6th* Weather cool clear and beautiful Drew five days Rations An order from Genl Hamilton<sup>22</sup> was read on Dress Parade fining several men in our and other Regiments for *straggling* on last march The fine is \$10.00 apiece and is to be taken out next pay day This will buy some poor whiskey for the General and his staff and the poor footsore private will scarcely

<sup>22</sup> Brig.-Gen. Charles S. Hamilton, commanded Grant's center in this movement, while Maj.-Gen. James B. McPherson commanded the left, and Maj.-Gen. W. T. Sherman the right wing. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:423; *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 467.

miss \$10.00 from his *extravagant* salary of \$13.00 per month All the troops have gone on from here except our Division

*Dec 7th Sunday:* Last night was cold and frosty and the ice hung around the edges of the little ponds of water all day We have built chimneys in our tents and can keep warm Took a walk down to the mill. An over-shot wheel turns a set of burrs on the little creek and soldiers are running the mill Our Regt is having a Grist of corn ground A Patrol guard goes around the camp and arrests all men found rambling around after 9 oclock at night Gen M. M. Crocker commands Brigade and has his tent just across the creek and in front of our Regiment. Last night Lieut Christofel Co "K" was officer of the guard and he went to his tent after 12 oclock and his men made a good deal of noise Crocker had the Lieut arrested and several of his men brought before him He says the 15th Regiment is a set of G—d——d *militia* He hates our Col Reid like *pisen* and does not speak to him with as much respect as he would to a 1st class government mule Crocker has several of Co "B" under *guard* close to his head quarters for raising the *devil* with their Capt (Studer) Studer undertook to *buck* and *gag* a few of the noisest ones but *failed* and they had so much noise about it that Crocker sent for them

*Dec 8th* Weather clear calm and warm enough to go without our coats The details from our Co are heavy. We have camp guard police fatigue &c Tom Safford the next worst *wag* to John Cozad — and I made some *hominy* to-day Gephart Co "D" returned to-day He is the *first* one to return who was taken prisoner at Shiloh He reports hard treatment at the hands of the Rebs

*Dec 9th* Dont know what the weather is outside — but inside of me it has been terrific. Have eat too much corn bread ground at *our mill* consisting of whole grains, cobs &c

*Dec 10th* Weather fine There was a detail of 1 Sergt and two men called from our Company to go foraging to-day I volunteered to go and we went about three miles and found plenty of Corn Filled ten wagons and Killed 14 hogs The plantation contained several hundred acres and the owner was in the Southern Army until he died and the widow lives in Abbeville Qr Master Shannon was along We also found 37 bales of cotton There was 25 Negroes on the place and they seemed contented and *happy* The boys *bought* a lot of stuff from them and paid for it in *fac-simile* copies of Confederate money The copies are manufactured in Phila

and other places and is used here to *purchase* Confederate *produce*<sup>23</sup> This is the lowest of all *meanness* Better take the property by force than to impose upon the ignorance of these *poor slaves*

About 200 Confederate prisoners came in to-day from the South. They were principally Kentuckians and Tennesseans and said that they were *tired* of the war I am afraid they will get rested and go at it again They report Price's Army much demoralized and still *skedadling* southward Our Division brought in to-day sixty bales of cotton valued at \$32,000

Dec 11th Beautiful warm shining weather There is a general drilling among all the Regiments Gray says if something new does not come off soon he will kill a man to start some excitement 850 Rebel prisoners were brought in from the South to-day They had been captured by our Cavalry beyond Oxford The rank and file were the hardest looking set I have yet seen Few of them had Knapsacks and they carried their spare clothes done up in an old quilt They had no uniforms and were dressed in all colors and were dirty and filthy Some of them were very footsore and could hardly walk A six mule team hauled one wagon load of them that had *pegged* out The officers were generally well dressed and looked sharp and obstinate All of them looked haggard and worn out some were in good spirits and joked along One tall fellow with a big bundle of old clothes and a *fiddle* said as he walked along, I wonder how long we d——d Rebels will go before we camp They all when speaking of Genl Price called him *dad*

Dec 12th Some rain fell this evening Some few days ago I wrote a letter to Geo W Clark (late of the 3d Iowa) now raising the 34th Ia Regt for some position in his new Regt and only asked to be transferred in any capacity whatever and told him how I had been *cheated* here To-day I received a letter from him and he says that he would like to transfer me but that an order of the War Dept will not allow the transfer of any enlisted man from one Regt to another. . . .

#### *The Orderly Sergt at Home*

Dec 13th . . . The private soldier comes on duty now about every day

<sup>23</sup> The Southerners disliked Federal or "Lincoln" money, and would always take Confederate bills in preference to more reliable currency. Counterfeit "Rebel" money was manufactured in the North and sold for \$4.00 per 1,000, according to an advertisement in *Harper's Weekly*, 6:656 (Oct. 11, 1862). See Fred A. Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army, 1861-1865* (2 vols., Cleveland, 1928), 1:247.



The corporals about one day in four and the sergeants [sic] every ten days except the 1st sergeants and they are supposed to be on duty every day and night

The Orderly Sergt of a Co has the most laborious place in it, and only one or two besides myself occupy that position who started out in that position in the 15th Regt The Orderly is the school master and if the *big boys* like him he can teach the school out provided he can stand it to be a *dog* that will run when the Capt and Lieuts *whistle* and is always on hand night and day in sunshine and in storm with his detail at headquarters. The Sergeant Major depends upon him for the delivery of the detail of every kind of guard He must know where every man of his Company sleeps so that he can find [him] day or night without a lantern. He must know at a *glance* without looking at a mans *tongue* whether he is fit for duty. He must keep on a constant lookout to see if every man has the proper clothing. He must know the full accoutrement If a man lacks a cartridge or the least attachment to his gun and that should be a cause of that man *failing* to perform any duty the Capt wants to know of the Orderly why *this is thus* He must make every man come to Roll Call even if he has to stand in mud and snow in his *shirt tail* — he must be made to come to the chalk line No man can be permitted to answer to his name from his bunk or from his eating table — stand up in line and stay there until the last name is called and he has heard the command “break ranks” He must make every complaining man go to the “Surgeons Call” at 8 A. M. and if he can *play off* successfully or is too sick for duty active or graded he is permitted to lay off and the Orderly gets clear of all responsibility for 24 hours

On Sunday morning his duty is to have the men up in good time and *shape* as possible and out in Company *shape* so that when [the] *August* presence of the Capt appears he may feel *proud* of his gallant Company No *stray gray-back* must be seen cantering over the mens clothes as the keen eye of the Capt may *detect* it and then the Orderly will receive a quiet *reprimand* and be told that such things *look* decidedly *unmilitary* Five Roll Calls per day is now our daily allowance

The Orderly must know how much clothing each man has on hand even to a pair of socks and he must also see that the men keep themselves washed clean and have no dirt behind their *ears* and that they observe all orders coming from the Regulations, Regimental headquarters or from the Capt Then the Orderly must always help make — or altogether make — out



Muster and Pay Rolls and must know the date of enlistment, time of muster in and the *fate* or *presence* or exact location of each man in the Co, the date of his furlough (if absent) when it expired and must call such man a *deserter* if not back dead or alive at the expiration of leave of absence The Adjutant Genl of Iowa must have a monthly Report of all changes in the Company and the Adj of the Regt must have his little Morning Report of all present fit for *duty*, sick or absent and thus the round goes round

Then the Orderly must meet out the most *exact justice* in the matter of *details* from the Co or the men will find fault and some will think they are detailed too often and will whine and complain and he has to stand between the "devil and the deep sea" and set his face like flint against some and others he must humor or punish to keep things balanced The meanest private soldier will *cuss* him if he finds a *maggot* in his bread and the Col will reduce him to the ranks if he should omit the least thing (Not knowing of course that he is *confering* the greatest favor upon the *Victim* of his *rage*) The Commissioned officers of the Co will draw the pay for responsibility and then make the orderly the only responsible man in the Company It would take volumes to tell how much hard and thankless work and duty can be piled on an Orderly Sergt and it would only require a single *Cypher* to tell how few and small the *thanks* he receives for the vigilance watchfulness and care he is compelled to exercise His *lucrative* salary of \$20.00 per month is supposed to console him somewhat But \$16.00 [*sic* \$13.00] per month as a private soldier is full of glory, happiness and contentment compared to the other.

*Dec 14th Sunday:* Weather cloudy and warm with a southeast wind. Capt Studer officer of the Day *arrested* several men of the *dirty* 16th for washing and committing other nuisances in the little branch out of which we have to use *water* Col Dewey of the 23d Iowa is *dead* Old Whiskey at last laid him out as it is laying out many a thousand other men in this Army<sup>24</sup> It is killing more than the Confederates are killing

*Dec 15th* Have had a terrible storm of rain and wind We have had nothing to eat to-day but *bull beef* and hard tack We have to put one foot on the beef when we pull off a *bite* Had a fire in tent but it almost smoked us out Old "Iron Clad" Cunningham (as the boys called him when he

<sup>24</sup> Again Boyd is unjust to the unpopular Dewey who died of erysipelas. A. A. Stuart, *Iowa Colonels and Regiments* . . . (Des Moines, 1865), 382.

bought his bullet proof vest in St Louis) don't seem to be friendly now with Co "G" and more especially with myself. . . .

Dec 16th We have had a cold north wind all day "Iron Clad" fined two men ten dollars each in our Regt and the sentence was read on Dress Parade this eve One man named Tovey of Co "H" was fined \$26.00 Dollars (2 months wages) for disobedience of orders . . .

*March to Oxford and South — Mississippi*

Dec 18th Had orders to be ready to move at 10 o'clock. Marched until 4 O'clock when we crossed a muddy creek 8 miles south of Abbeville and stacked arms and laid down on the ground for the night

Dec 19th Marched at daylight and soon came to Oxford a nice little town and having a College or University General Grants headquarters are here and as our Division filed by each Regt was fronted toward where the General stood on an open porch and close to the street and the men were ordered to give "three cheers" for Genl Grant In our Regt only a scattering few cheered But I could hear the men say in a low voice *damn* Genl Grant The Genl bowed and did not seem to care whether we cheered or *cussed* We were taken out of the line of march to see Genl Grant — about one mile None of us would have volunteered to go out of our way 2 rods to see him It seems to be a wonder to *all* why he should be kept in command since the battle of Shiloh The men have no confidence in him<sup>25</sup>

The soldiers occupy all the nice places here and there are many of them surrounded by fine lawns and most beautiful shrubbery and evergreens One large brick building was full of prisoners and they looked out and

<sup>25</sup> This opinion of Grant seemed quite prevalent among the soldiers at this time. Sergeant Onley Andrus of the 95th Illinois wrote of him: "Gen Grant (who by the way is a *Gen* I have but little faith in as a General) made a speech at Grand Junction the other day." Fred Albert Shannon (ed.), *The Civil War Letters of Sergeant Onley Andrus* (Urbana, 1947. *Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences*, Vol. XXVII, No. 4), 28. "Monroe" of the 15th Iowa shared Boyd's opinion: "'U. S.' is a very slow coach, and if he 'can't keep hotel, better ought to take in his sign.'" Keokuk *Gate City*, Oct. 15, 1862. On the other hand, "John" of the 10th Iowa wrote from Oxford, Miss., on Dec. 10, 1862: "Gen. Grant was never more popular with the army than now. As he rides along the lines on review, you can see confidence depicted on every countenance, and his eye sparkes with pride as he looks upon his noble army. And well he may be proud of them—for when the Western soldiers *fight* they *whip*." Des Moines *Iowa State Register*, Dec. 24, 1862. Grant's universal popularity would come later. In December of 1863, Downing of the 11th Iowa wrote: "General Grant is the man for us yet. All are loud in their praise of Grant, and declare that he is the coming man of the time. . . ." Clark (ed.), *Downing's Civil War Diary*, 157.

passed some jokes The Negroes are very plenty and stood along the streets by hundreds Going on south we marched 8 miles and finally camped on a creek close to a mill The distance from Abbeville is 19 miles This place is called Yocona The country is sand hills with scattering timber

"Dad" Price, *Van Dorn & Co Looking for Us — Mississippi*

Dec 20th. Have been busy all day cleaning off our Camp ground and splitting Chestnut timber to drive in the ground to raise our tents on and we have been fixing up as if we were going to winter here At dark to-night we have up bunks and are very well fixed Three or four Regiments of Cavalry passed us to-day going *North* We have discouraging rumors this evening That the Rebs have run into Holly Springs and have possession of the place — have torn up the Railroad and captured all our supplies<sup>26</sup> 9 o'clock PM Have just received orders to be ready to march at 6 o'clock to-morrow morning

*On the Retreat Mississippi*

Dec 21st Sunday: The Cooks remained up and at work until midnight last night Cooking *Corn bread* We use the meal unbolted and we have no sieves I had to draw Rations for the Co for 4 days At 4 A M Reveille beat and we divided out the 4 days Rations among the men and were ready at 6 o'clock to move The whole Division commenced moving *Northward* We reached Oxford at 11 o'clock Many of the wom[en] here were visible and wore a look of joy and *triumph* and to indicate that we had got into a trap<sup>27</sup> Great crowds of Negroes stood along the side walks dressed in their best Sunday clothes and many of them looked frightened and dis-

<sup>26</sup> The loss of the supplies at Holly Springs, due to the hit and run raid of Van Dorn, was a blow to Grant's campaign, cutting his long north and south line through the center of Mississippi, and forcing a retreat north. Holly Springs had been left under the command of Colonel Robert C. Murphy of the 8th Wisconsin. Grant wrote of this disaster: "The capture was a disgraceful one to the officer commanding but not to the troops under him. . . . Murphy was . . . warned of Van Dorn's approach, but made no preparations to meet him. He did not even notify his command." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:432, 433. On January 3, 1863, Murphy was "dismissed from the service of the United States, to take effect from the 20th day of December, 1862, the date of his cowardly and disgraceful conduct." *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 516.

<sup>27</sup> "The news of the capture of Holly Springs and the destruction of our supplies caused much rejoicing among the people remaining in Oxford. They came with broad smiles on their faces, indicating intense joy, to ask what I was going to do now without anything for my soldiers to eat." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:435. When Grant advised them that he intended to live off the country, the smiles soon turned to dismay.



heartened that we were going *back* Here we met Genl Quimby's Division coming in on another road Halted at the Creek where we had formerly camped and ate dinner At Sundown we were in our old camp near Abbeville having marched 19 miles to-day Weary and worn out we slept on our old bunks once more

*Camp at Holly Springs Mississippi*

Dec 22d Weather warm and *roads good* Started at day break toward Holly Springs Had Knapsacks guns and 40 rounds and traveled very fast At noon we ate dinner at the Tallahatchie on our old camp ground. Made a hard march until 7 P M After dark we entered Holly Springs and went through the town and halted on the North side Soon as the men could get their things off they commenced going for things generally. Every one was gone except those who could not travel from fatigue As for myself I was so far gone that I could not get up to move I could hear hogs squeal and chickens squall in all directions By 11 oclock we had devoured some fresh pig Sergt Gray had secured for our mess a fine Pig. He can hear a hog grunt or a chicken breathe as far as any other man in this Army . . .

Dec 23d Reveille at 4 A. M. The men were very tired and sore but with about the average amount of groaning and *swearing* they got out. At 8 A M we were told that we should not march to-day The wagons were unloaded and foraging parties sent out<sup>28</sup> Almost all the men left Camp and were soon scattered all over the town in a few hours Soldiers could be seen everywhere Out of the cellar of a large brick residence close to our camp there came a constant stream of men and others kept going in and it resembled a *hive of bees* I went over and found the molasses running about 2 inches deep on the floor of the cellar and the men were wading through and carrying off various articles The occupants of the house were inside and locked up and no one outside except a little Negro boy Around were all the indications of Wealth Beautiful shrubbery and trees and vines and flowers and arbors While I was looking around I heard a *row* inside and soon seen a soldier come through the kitchen window heels first and a boot close to his *rear* and attached to a pair of *shoulder straps* About this time I had *business* toward camp

<sup>28</sup> "I was amazed at the quantity of supplies the country afforded. It showed that we could have subsisted off the country for two months instead of two weeks without going beyond the limits designated. This taught me a lesson which was taken advantage of later in the campaign when our army lived twenty days with the issue of only five days' rations by the commissary." *Ibid.*, 435.



Going down to the "Clayton House" a large frame building I noticed a great crowd around the front door with their arms full of books and papers. I came around the house and just then a lady raised the window and called to me and asked me if I was an officer. I replied that I was not a commissioned officer. Said she for Gods sake keep the "soldiers from breaking into my room they have possession of the house and I fear they will Kill me" I told her not to fear as no man would disturb her. She was a rather good looking woman and had four little children with her. This evening this same woman was arrested for shooting one of our men who was on guard at the "Clayton House" (2 days ago). She cowardly shot him although he was guarding her property. This whole town was literally gutted to-day<sup>29</sup>

Van Dorn was here two days ago with a large force of Cavalry and surprised what few men we had here. Then the Rebs blew up several buildings right in the Centre of the town and burned the Depots and all the rolling stock and Warehouses and destroyed more than one million Dollars worth of our supplies and also captured several of our Pay Masters with large amounts of Money.<sup>30</sup> Long trains of cars were burned with all their contents and nothing but the irons and trucks stand on the track for almost a mile. There has been a fearful destruction of property and many of the citizens were killed by the explosions. The 101st Ills Infy and the 2d Ills Cavalry had been left to guard the Post. The Cav fought as long as they could and then had to retreat. The Infantry surrendered at the first summons and scarcely fired a gun. Col Murphy of the 8th Wisconsin commanded.

I found the Court House square filled with horses, cannon and ammunition. Women with band-boxes and other traps were leaving in all directions. The soldiers were in every house and garret and cellar, store and church, and nook and corner. The streets were white with all kinds of paper and men were running with their arms full of books and ledgers and

<sup>29</sup> Sergeant Downing, of the 11th Iowa, was in Holly Springs that day. "The rebels before leaving town burned several houses, altogether some two or three squares, besides burning about one million of our rations, and we are again short of food. On that account the boys are not in the best of humor, and every man has practically a free hand to take anything that he can use or that he may want; and there are no officers out looking for corporals to reduce to the ranks as was done on our way south." Clark (ed.), *Downing's Civil War Diary*, 88-9.

<sup>30</sup> Grant reported \$400,000 worth of property taken; Van Dorn claimed \$1,500,000. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 478, 503.

one lot of soldiers had their arms full of Confederate *bank notes* which were perfect in all except the Presidents signature (I think the President did not have time to sign) The boys said they could do that *themselves* On the east side of the square the large brick buildings which we saw there two weeks ago were now one vast shapeless mass of ruins Some of these buildings had been stored with shell and other ammunition and explosive Material Fully one half the fine buildings on North side of the square were likewise blown to pieces

There had been a Bank in one of them and some gold and silver had been melted among the rubbish and the soldiers were in digging to their knees in the brick bats Sudden and complete destruction has overtaken this city When we went down through here the women and even the children could insult us in every way and we did not disturb a hair of their heads But it remained for their *own friends* to complete their woe If the Confederates treat their own people thus what would they do with their enemies I came to Genl Grants headquarters and saw him talking to an Officer He stood with his hands in his pockets like a common farmer and looked as unconcerned as if he was selling eggs at 2 cts per dozen Everyone thinks Grant has made another big blunder in allowing the Army thus to be cut off from our base of supplies The Col Murphy who surrendered here is the same man who surrendered about 100,000 000\$ [sic] worth of supplies at Iuka to Price He is called a *traitor*

I came by a fine large Roman Catholic Church A lot of soldiers were in the building some were taking the organ to pieces and had the pipes out blowing on them and throwing them away Up in the pulpit was a squad playing *cards* and another lot were scattering the library over the floor One daring and reckless soldier climbed to the pinnacle of the temple and took off the little silver image of "Jesus" that stood there. It was at a giddy height but he got it — said to be worth several hundred dollars Every portion of the *fated city* seemed given over to *pillage* and destruction and no hand was raised to save anything from the general *sack and ruin*

Finely dressed ladies were leaving on all the streets and going God knows where Women and children were standing in their houses wailing with the most piteous cries Young girls whose eyes were red with weeping peered from behind the curtains of the windows and gazed listlessly upon the passing throngs that crowded the streets No insults were offered any women or citizen that I saw or heard of

When I had witnessed all this destruction and terror my heart almost ceased to beat when I thought of the sadness and woe that is caused by this inhuman war of brother against brother and how the innocent shall suffer in the cause of treason and Rebellion

Railroad communication is completely broken up and we are about out of provisions and Memphis [is] now our base of supplies which is a long way off Marion Mart one of our Co left here was taken prisoner and parolled by the enemy

Dec 24th From poverty and want we have suddenly become rich and stuck up. We have been sleeping on slanting rails and on the cold frosty earth or under a mule wagon or indeed we have slept in all kinds of places with a stone for a pillow But we are above that now We have mahogany bedsteads and the finest lounges that this Market affords The tents are not large enough to hold all the fine furniture now on hands. Dan Embree, Gray, Harv Reid and I are all in one tent We have fine Carpet down, a stove and more stuff than we actually need. We are short of provisions but shall trust to Gray<sup>31</sup>

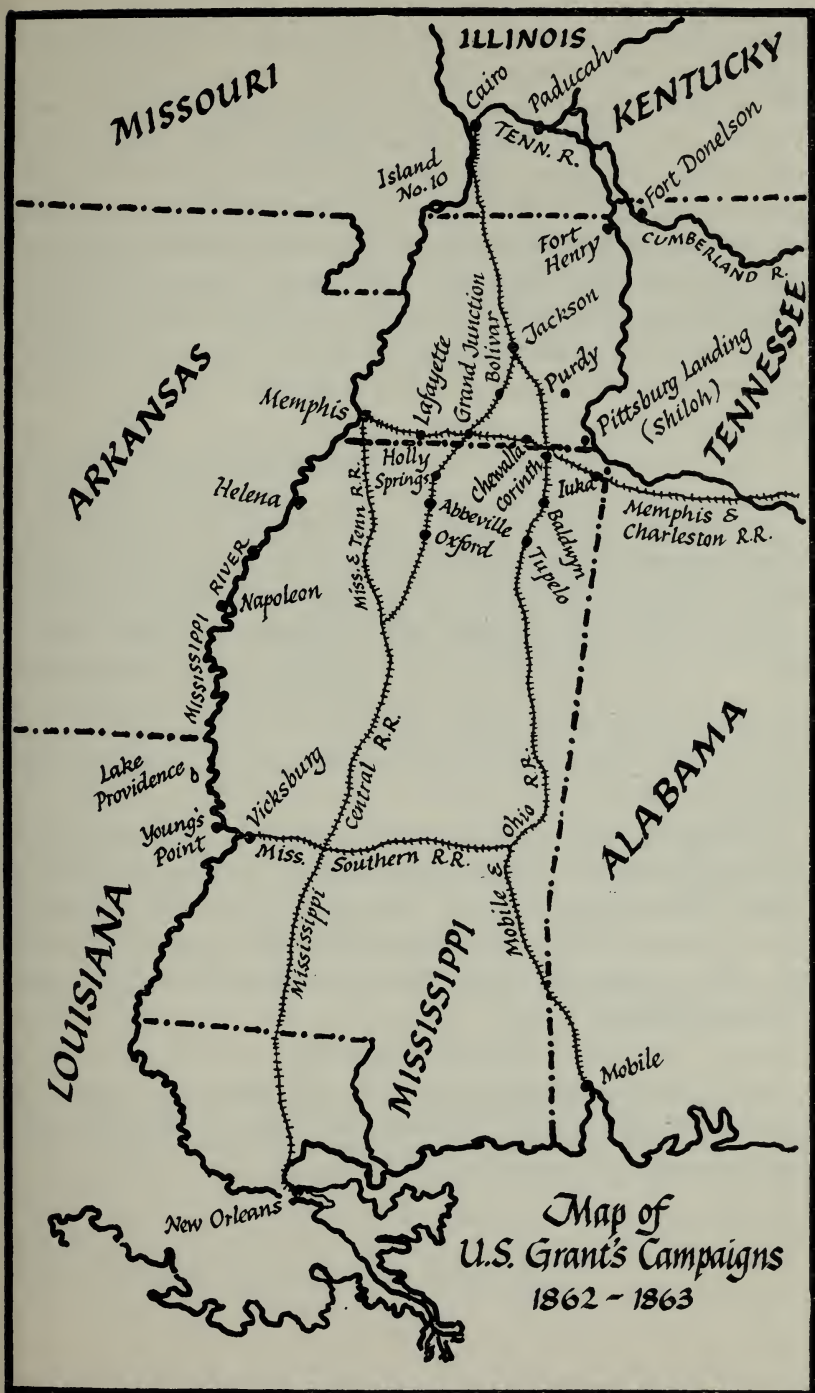
Dec 25th Christmas We are not so merry as we might be. No demonstration in Camp would indicate this Holiday Have nothing to eat but a little Corn bread and some tough beef Genl Logans Division went North to-day

Dec 26th To-day has been wet and gloomy and has rained about all day. A great train of wagons left here for Memphis to bring provisions A heavy guard went along and also took about 1000 prisoners or parolled men left here by the enemy — but will have to be exchanged before they can bear arms again The 101st Ills was also taken and had to run the gauntlet of abuse as they marched by That Regt will be notoriously known hereafter

Dec 27th . . . Gray and I went up town this evening and after rambling around for some time when a man with "birds" on his shoulders (a Colonel) ordered every man arrested who had no Pass signed by Division

<sup>31</sup> Downing wrote on Dec. 25: "We are still on half rations. But in spite of it, the boys are all enjoying themselves. They are taking everything that they can lay their hands on, carrying to their tents couches, rockers, chairs, tables, books, bric-a-brac—in fact, all kinds of household articles. Some of the boys, who are lovers of fancy books, sent home by express some of the most costly bound volumes. Holly Springs has certainly paid dear for burning our supplies." Clark (ed.), *Downing's Civil War Diary*, 89.







Commander — and set him to *work*. Gray and I had pressing business at Camp as we had no Passes. "We done left" We are living hard now. Out of coffee and to-day we drew 6 days [rations] Consisting of *Corn meal*, 1 Box ckr's 2 shoulders of Meat and some wheat for coffee No article can take the place of Coffee to the soldier He carries it in a little sack in his pocket and watches it as he does his scanty pay of \$13.00 per mo When the weather is cold and wet and he is deprived of this favorite beverage he becomes revolutionary and almost unmanageable With his daily allowance he will bear and forbear — but without it he may *rebel* at any moment

*Dec 28th Sunday:* Had Inspection at 10 AM Gray and Dan Embree went out and found a fat hog and a few turnips and we shall live while we live . . .

*On the march toward Memphis*

*Lafayette sta Tennessee*

*Dec 30th* Have traveled 18 miles to-day in the direction of Memphis It rained some this forenoon and the roads are bad We are camped tonight close to a branch of Wolf River and have plenty of good dry rails to burn

*Dec 31st* We were *rear guard* to-day and had a hard time Came 18 miles and carried our Knapsacks and all our traps Tonight we are camped close to Lafayette a station on the M & C R R<sup>32</sup> When we stacked arms to-night some went for Water and some went for wood and some went for *hog* In a little while the timber around camp was laden with *skinned* hogs, cattle &c

Last night was cold and frosty and this morning the ground was frozen Our gun barrels felt very cold to our bare hands. This winds up 1862 with its joys and a multitude of sorrows We are now in the dense dark wilderness of uncertainty and the silver lining of the dark cloud of war is not visible How long shall this struggle last no one seems to know but *He* who knowest all things.

*(To be continued)*

<sup>32</sup> The Memphis & Charleston Railroad. Lafayette Station, on the railroad, was just across the northern border of Mississippi, in Tennessee. This northward movement of the troops was in preparation for the removal of Grant's headquarters from central Mississippi to Memphis. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:438.

## HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

### *State Historical Society of Iowa*

The annual Mississippi River steamboat cruises for members of the Society were held on June 28, 29, July 4, 5, 6, and July 12, 13, aboard the *Rob Roy III*, with Commodore O. D. Collis and Superintendent William J. Petersen as hosts. All trips started from and returned to Clinton. Some 700 members and their friends took part.

Dr. William J. Petersen has written the first two volumes of a four-volume *Story of Iowa* recently published by the Lewis Publishing Company of New York. The third and fourth volumes contain biographies of Iowans. This is the first new history of Iowa to appear in twenty-one years. The volumes of history prepared by Dr. Petersen contain some 300 illustrations, both old and modern, and a great deal of statistical information not before available in one place. The books are not for general sale, having been sold previously on a subscription basis.

New accessions to our library include twenty-six new county plat books which have been sent in by members in response to a request in the December *News for Members*. Charles A. Hawthorn has given to the Society several diaries and miscellaneous papers of his grandfather, William E. Hawthorn of Riverside. Mrs. Sarah Gillespie Huftalen of Manchester has presented the Society with a series of diaries kept by her mother, Mrs. James F. Gillespie, covering the years 1858 through 1888.

Superintendent William J. Petersen addressed a meeting of the Iowa Society of Washington, D. C., on May 18. After the meeting Representative James I. Dolliver, president of the Iowa Society, presented Dr. Petersen with a large cup engraved with the names of past presidents of the Iowa group. This cup will be deposited at the State Historical Society of Iowa.

The Board of Curators and Superintendent Petersen honored Mr. and Mrs. Norman B. Shaffer at a tea at the Memorial Union in Iowa City on May 25, 1952. Mr. Shaffer, president of the First National Bank in Iowa City, was recently appointed Treasurer of the Society.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S CALENDAR

- April 3        Attended farewell for Forrest Spaulding at Des Moines.  
 April 17-19    Attended meeting of Mississippi Valley Historical Association at Chicago.  
 April 21        Interviewed by Betty Wells over Radio Station KIOA in Des Moines about work of the State Historical Society.  
 April 21        Addressed Newton Women's Club.  
 May 15         Commencement address at West Chester.  
 May 18         Addressed Iowa Society at Washington, D. C.  
 May 22         Commencement address at Dana.  
 June 3         Addressed Des Moines Ad Club.

The following members were elected to membership in the State Historical Society during the months of March, April, and May:

*Algona*

Mrs. Fred S. Geigel  
 R. I. Mawdsley  
 V. K. Rising

*Ames*

Kenneth L. McFate

*Arcadia*

Robert Kaspersen

*Atlantic*

Atlantic Public Schools  
 Miss Bertha Kjar

*Avoca*

Oscar H. Rock

*Bennett*

Mrs. J. G. Engel

*Boone*

Mrs. Jessie Merrill Dwelle

*Bronson*

Superintendent of Schools

*Carlisle*

Austin Schooler

*Carroll*

Mrs. G. C. Richerson

*Cedar Falls*

John W. Teter

*Cedar Rapids*

Robert H. Caldwell  
 Ralph F. Dresher  
 Theodore Froeberg  
 Mrs. J. W. Houser  
 Mrs. Vernon E. Lichtenstein  
 Dr. Frederick W. Mulsow

*Centerville*

Hillis A. Johnson

*Charles City*

Mrs. Arnold P. Niedorf

*Clarinda*

C. Edwin Hoskinson

*Clinton*

Frank C. Bonebrake  
 Mrs. John A. Buchanan  
 Miss Elise A. Schnell

*Columbus Junction*

Mrs. Glen Cummings  
 W. D. Dillon

*Council Bluffs*

Harvey R. Horton

*Dallas Center*

Mrs. Ethel Hays

*Davenport*

Miss Vera Ehlers

Mervin A. Fulton

Miss Gladys Furniss

Cable Von Maur

*Decorah*

Mrs. Olaf Williams

*Des Moines*

Ralph W. Baker

Carl L. Bloom

A. E. Brickley

Miss A. Florence Carl

Elmer Cobb

Walter P. Davis

Neal A. Dellinger

Miss Kathryn McLaughlin

Carl F. Mahnke

George F. Malcolm

Masonic Temple Library

Raymond R. Mitchell

William F. Poorman

R. L. Shultz

Miss Irene M. Smith

Joseph J. Stanton

Miss Margaret E. Tomlinson

M. M. Welton

*Douds*

Mrs. Tom Nutt

*Dubuque*

John P. Dorweiler

Miss Minnie Ricklefs

William G. Rozeboom

*Eagle Grove*

Mrs. Harry M. Clappison

*Elkader*

H. M. Wolf

*Fairfield*

Lewis W. Cooley

*Fort Dodge*

Robert D. Brainerd

*Griswold*

Horace Ireland

*Guttenberg*

Chris A. Frommelt

Clifford C. Frommelt

Kann's Gift Shop

L. B. Kent

Harold E. Murray

Rev. E. J. Starr

Cornelius Tuecke

Jerome J. Tujetsch

*Hampton*

Rev. Ralph Baker

Mrs. A. G. Madsen

*Harlan*

Harlan Public Schools

*Humboldt*

Mrs. Arthur E. Strachan

*Ida Grove*

Lee A. Horn

*Indianola*

James W. Ritchie

*Iowa City*

Mrs. W. J. Boatman

Mrs. Herman Bushman

Robert M. Carran

Clark DeHaven

Kenneth M. Dunlop

Miss Elizabeth Emmons



- Clifford E. Haley  
 Mrs. Charles A. Hawthorn  
 Dr. Peter P. Laude  
 E. Wallace McMullen  
 Joseph E. Negus  
 Mrs. Joseph E. Negus  
 John C. Nunn  
 Grant Pickering  
 Mrs. R. G. Schreffler  
 Robert Jean Shafer  
 Mrs. Mildred Dow Voss  
*Keokuk*  
 Mrs. John G. Bartholomew  
 Robert A. Kammerer  
 Mrs. Jesse M. Marsh  
 W. W. Wolf  
*Lake City*  
 Dr. Paul Ferguson  
*Lamoni*  
 Mrs. Lillian McAninch  
*Lewis*  
 Miss Helen DeLean  
*Lowden*  
 Rev. Norman S. Roberts  
*McGregor*  
 Effigy Mounds National  
 Monument  
*Madrid*  
 Miss Esther E. Sundberg  
*Manchester*  
 M. H. Runkle  
*Manly*  
 Dr. Gabriel Westly  
 Soren Westly, Jr.  
*Marble Rock*  
 Mrs. Ralph A. Wilson
- Mason City*  
 Joel F. Hanes  
 Mrs. Ida L. Kinney  
*Missouri Valley*  
 Mrs. Nellie M. Mackland  
*Mount Vernon*  
 Robert C. Jeffrey  
*Muscatine*  
 Miss Bernice L. Gravatt  
 Dr. Robert F. Klein  
*Nashua*  
 C. J. Weidler  
*Newton*  
 Frederick Bock  
 Arza R. Hughes  
 Dr. J. P. Hull  
 W. J. Molleck  
 Mrs. Edith Mooar  
 Mrs. Daisy M. Santen  
 Melvin A. Scholl  
 Jack M. Wormley  
*North English*  
 Alfred J. Johnson  
*Northwood*  
 M. H. Kepler  
 Worth Co. Supt. of Schools  
*Ogden*  
 Dr. R. W. Jack  
*Osceola*  
 J. M. Grimes  
*Ottumwa*  
 Edward T. Buckley  
*Pierson*  
 Pierson Consolidated School  
*Ralston*  
 Ralston Public Schools

*Renwick*

Mrs. George Latch

*Saint Anthony*

Mrs. Cozzie R. Dillon

*Spirit Lake*

Miss Ione McClintock

*Stockport*

Mrs. Roy T. Lanam

*Tipton*

Mrs. Ruth Hegarty

*Viola*

Mrs. Nellie Patterson

*Waterloo*

Arnold C. Rathkey

Kenneth J. Stultz

*Waukon*

Mrs. William H. Hegeman

*Webster City*

Mrs. E. M. Jeffers

A. G. Osmundson

*What Cheer*

Irving J. Smith

*Woodward*

Mrs. J. G. Krenmyre

*Wyoming*

LeRoy Bender

*California*

Robert C. Aulmann,

Studio City

Ralph W. Core, Glendale

Iowa Association of Long Beach,

Long Beach

Guy Lundvall, San Francisco

*Washington, D. C.*

Mrs. Mary L. Hanna

Clark R. Mollenhoff

*Illinois*

Warren S. Smith, Rockford

*New Jersey*

Princeton University Library,

Princeton

*Tennessee*

Albert Dillahunty, Pittsburg

Landing

Francis R. Holland, Pittsburg

Landing

Roy H. Gustafson of Des Moines was elected a Life Member of the Society.

*Iowa Historical Activities*

The thirtieth annual History Conference at the State University of Iowa was held March 28-29, 1952. Speakers were Daniel J. Boorstin, University of Chicago; George L. Mosse, University of Iowa; Hajo Holborn, Yale University; Fred A. Shannon, University of Illinois; and Burr W. Phillips, University of Wisconsin. A seminar room in the new University Library was dedicated to the memory of Winfred T. Root, former head of the history department of the University.

Mrs. Faye Brice MacMartin of Tama was re-elected president of the Tama County Historical Society at their annual meeting, April 9, 1952.

Other officers are: Harold Hufford, Toledo, vice-president; E. A. Benson, Toledo, secretary-treasurer; and Roy L. Shaffer, William Malin, and Mrs. Herbert Giger, members of the board of directors.

The Louisa County Medical Society observed its centennial on April 24, 1952, at Wapello. This is the oldest county medical society in Iowa.

The Rt. Rev. Msgr. M. M. Hoffman of Dyersville was elected president of the Dubuque County Historical Society at its annual meeting on May 8, 1952. Fred Fuhrmann was elected vice-president; Miss Elsie Datismann, secretary; and Mrs. Marjory Ferguson, treasurer. Msgr. Hoffman is the author of *Antique Dubuque* and other works of history, and is at present preparing an article on the growth of the Catholic Church in Iowa for *The Palimpsest*. Major General Ulysses S. Grant, III, addressed the Society at its meeting on May 22, 1952.

The Mahaska County Historical Society held its annual meeting in Oskaloosa on May 14, 1952. Marion H. Pothoven was elected new president, to succeed Stillman Clark. Other officers elected were: J. C. Mattix, vice-president; E. L. Butler, treasurer; Mrs. Phil Hardinger, secretary; Mrs. Stillman Clark, historian; Stillman Clark, curator; and Hobart Morris, Dr. F. A. Gillett, Zola Kramme, C. D. Mattix, and John Sproatt as directors. The Museum of the Society held open house during the week and more than 600 persons attended.

Dr. H. B. Field of Decorah was elected president of the Iowa Archaeological Society at its meeting at Cherokee on May 18, 1952. Will Logan of McGregor is editor of the Journal of the Society. Vice-presidents are W. D. Frankforter of Cherokee, C. Lowell Miller of Davenport, S. A. Cohagan of Waterloo, Paul R. Rowe of Glenwood, and W. J. Kennedy of McGregor. Mrs. A. I. Mason of Cedar Rapids is secretary-treasurer.

George E. Pike was elected chairman of the Henry W. Grout Historical Museum Commission at Waterloo at a meeting on May 18, 1952. He succeeds the late John W. Rath, who had been chairman since the death of Henry W. Grout in 1930. Other members of the board of trustees are James M. Graham, treasurer, and Howard H. Rath. S. A. Cohagan is secretary and custodian of the Museum. According to the will of Henry W. Grout, his fine collection of Americana was to remain on display in the YMCA for fifteen years after his death, after which it was to be housed in

a museum. The Commission is anxious to add material to the collection, which consists of material on Lincoln, American presidents, the Civil War, and Iowa history.

Members of the Guthrie County Historical Society made a tour of Madison County covered bridges and the site of the original Delicious Apple tree, June 1, 1952. The trip was made by bus. Mrs. Gladys Kasner, Panora, is secretary of the Society.

The annual meeting of the Adair County Historical Society was held June 8, 1952, at Fontanelle. E. E. Johnson of Greenfield is secretary of the Society.

A feature of the centennial of Wartburg College was a pageant at Waverly on June 11, 1952. Over 200 persons took part in the pageant, which portrayed the 100 years of the College's history in 21 scenes. Another pageant, called "Cedar Falls Centurama," was part of the July 2-4 centennial celebration in that city. Held in the State Teachers College stadium, the pageant had a cast of some 700 people.

Crawford County plans to celebrate its 100th birthday in July, 1952. The town of St. Charles in Madison County will be 100 years old on October 7, 1952; the Coe College centennial was celebrated in May, 1952. Nevada and Story County are making plans for a centennial in 1953, while the Ringgold County Historical Society is already beginning work for its centennial in 1955.

Tabor's centennial was observed July 23-25, 1952. The celebration was the culmination of almost two years of planning. Parades, concerts, window displays, and the usual old-time costumes and beards were all features of the birthday.

A Guttenberg Historical Society has been organized, with Dr. W. W. Jacobs as president, G. W. Hunt as vice-president, and Clifford Frommelt as secretary-treasurer. Directors are W. D. Weyant and C. J. Kann.

The Marshall County Historical Society, originally organized in 1908 but inactive since 1939, has been revived and new officers elected. For president, the group chose R. A. Rockhill; for vice-president, Mrs. Frank Blanchard; secretary, Mrs. John L. Lowry; treasurer, Perry Cooper; and curator, Mrs. Laurence Belknap. Members of the board of directors are



Genevieve Coates, Mrs. E. Lester Williams, Mrs. M. U. Chesire, George Lewis, Mrs. Wallace Arney, Dr. R. M. Allen, and Ray P. Scott. The impetus to the revival of the Society was given by the will of the late Mrs. Susie F. Sower, formerly active in the original Society. Her will provided funds for a historical museum.

### *Other Historical Activities*

At the meeting of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association at Chicago, April 17-19, 1952, James L. Sellers of the University of Nebraska was elected president, and Fred A. Shannon of the University of Illinois, vice-president. The 1953 meeting of the Association will be held at Lexington, Kentucky.

The Minnesota Historical Society held its annual meeting in Minneapolis on May 14, 1952. To aid in the preservation on microfilm of Minnesota newspapers, a joint committee of the Minnesota Editorial Association and the Society has been appointed to study the problem.

The annual meeting of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin was held at the Trees for Tomorrow Camp, Eagle River, June 6-8, 1952. To head the Society's American History Research Center, George Waller has been appointed Director. Mr. Waller will supervise a national program of grants-in-aid and also raise funds for the program of the Center, which covers study in state, regional, and local history. The Wisconsin Society's Labor History project is going forward with renewed vigor. The John Crerar Library of Chicago has turned over to the Society certain holdings in the labor field, and the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor has given its second annual \$2,000 grant for the Project. Another project of the Society is the Medical History program. Since its inauguration a year ago, much valuable material has been collected by the director, Donald McNeil.

A new national society for the study of American civilization has been organized under the name American Studies Association. The aims of the society are "a better understanding of our country" through "communication across the established disciplines about the various aspects of America." Membership, at \$4.00 yearly, includes a subscription to the *American Quarterly*. The first president is Carl Bode of the University of Maryland; vice-president is Merle Curti of the University of Wisconsin; secretary-treasurer is Robert Land of the Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

Ohio will celebrate 150 years of statehood in 1953. A Sesquicentennial Commission, headed by Harvey S. Firestone, Jr. as chairman, is already busy at work with plans for the commemoration. Efforts will be made to organize every county in the state for participation in the birthday.

The third Wisconsin Institute on Local History was held at Madison June 23-25, 1952. Workshops, conferences, and general meetings were a feature of the Institute, the subjects all dealing with the various phases of work in local history.

The Historical Society of Michigan has a number of events scheduled for the summer months. The Third Annual Upper Peninsula Historical Conference was held at Houghton, June 21-22. On July 11-12 a Museum Conference was held at Kalamazoo. Tentative plans for the annual meeting of the Society are that it will be held in September at Petoskey which is celebrating its centennial. On September 16 there will be a Centennial Farm Marker Presentation at Adrian.

Director Harold D. Cater represented the Minnesota Historical Society at the jubilee convocation of the United States Military Academy at West Point on May 20. The Minnesota Historical Society was the only state society so represented.

## HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS

### Book Notes

*Lincoln and His Generals.* By T. Harry Williams. (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1952. \$4.00.) Hardly a phase of the life of Abraham Lincoln has been neglected by the historian. Here, Dr. Williams has written a study of Lincoln in his constitutional role of commander in chief. Not the least of the great president's problems was the handling of the clashing personalities of his generals. Lincoln was, writes Williams, "a great war president, probably the greatest in our history, and a great natural strategist, a better one than any of his generals. He was in actuality as well as in title the commander in chief who, by his larger strategy, did more than Grant or any general to win the war for the Union."

*The Decline of Laissez Faire, 1897-1917.* By Harold U. Faulkner. (New York, Rinehart & Co., 1951. \$6.00.) *The Transportation Revolution: Industry, 1815-1860.* By George Rogers Taylor. (New York, Rinehart & Co., 1951. \$4.50.) These two books are volumes 7 and 4, respectively, of the projected nine-volume *Economic History of the United States*, of which three other volumes have already been published. Each period of America's economic growth is handled by an expert in that particular field, and the whole project is a valuable contribution to modern historical writing.

*The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union.* By Bell I. Wiley. (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1952. \$6.00.) This is a companion volume to the author's *Life of Johnny Reb* published in 1943. The two volumes, based on wide reading in the letters and diaries of the soldier, North and South, present a neglected side of the Civil War — the life of the "common soldier."

*A Chronicle of Old Muskego. The Diary of Soren Bache, 1839-1847.* Translated and edited by Clarence A. Clausen and Andreas Elviken. (Northfield, Minn.: Norwegian-American Historical Assn., 1951. \$3.50.) The Norwegian-American Historical Association has published much worthwhile material on the Norwegians in America, and this book is an-

other valuable addition to this series. Muskego, Wisconsin, often called the "mother colony" of Norwegian immigrant settlement, owed much to the work of Bache. This published diary is, therefore, of interest as recounting the growth of a segment of the American frontier.

*Showboats: The History of an American Institution.* By Philip Graham. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1951. \$3.75.) The river showboats are a part of American culture. Dr. Graham, professor of American literature at the University of Texas, became interested in showboats in 1930 and has since spent long hours searching for material. His book, therefore, is a sound historical contribution, as well as a delightfully readable account of the American showboat.

### Articles

The October, 1951, issue of *Agricultural History* contains the following articles on American agriculture: "The Swamp Land Act and Wet Land Utilization in Illinois, 1850-1890," by Margaret Beattie Bogue; and "Steam Power on the American Farm, 1830-1880," by Reynold M. Wik.

Greenbackism in the South is discussed in "William Manning Lowe and the Greenback Party in Alabama" by Frances Roberts in the April, 1952, *Alabama Review*.

Although the Populist presidential candidate in 1892, James B. Weaver of Iowa, is well known, his running mate, James Gaven Field, has been neglected by historians. John H. Moore has written an article, "James Gaven Field, Populist Candidate for the Vice-Presidency," in the 1950-1951 volume of the *Papers of the Albemarle County Historical Society*.

Boyd C. Shafer's article, "Men Are More Alike," in the April, 1952, *American Historical Review*, discusses the likenesses of men instead of their differences. He concludes that "Scholars who stress [man's differences] to the exclusion of the known similarities do so at the expense of truth and to their own and mankind's great peril." Other articles in the same issue are: "The Historian and Southern Negro Slavery," by Kenneth M. Stamp, and "The Federalist — A Split Personality," by Alpheus Thomas Mason.

The Winter, 1951, *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* contains the following articles: "The America First Committee," by Wayne S.



Cole; "The Cherokee Cross Egypt," by Scerial Thompson; "Health Measures in Early Springfield," by Helen Van Cleave Blankmeyer; "Captain Benjamin Godfrey, The Prairie Prophet," by D. W. Denison; and "Lewis B. Parsons: Mover of Armies and Railroad Builder," by Harry E. Pratt. An account of recent political history is "How Big Bill Thompson Won Control of Chicago" by George Schottenhamel in the Spring, 1952, issue of the *Journal*.

The December, 1951, *Indiana Magazine of History* contains the following articles of general interest: "Eugene V. Debs: Conservative Labor Editor," by David A. Shannon; and "Roots of the Principle of Separation of Powers in the Indiana Constitution," by Darwin N. Kelley.

Of unusual interest is an article by James C. Malin in the November, 1951, *Kansas Historical Quarterly*: "The Motives of Stephen A. Douglas in the Organization of Nebraska Territory: A Letter Dated December 17, 1853." The May, 1952, *Quarterly* contains the following articles: "The Great Flood of 1844 along the Kansas and Marais Des Cynges Rivers," by S. D. Flora; "Farmer Debtors in Pioneer Kinsley," by Allan G. Bogue; and "Vincent B. Osborne's Civil War Experiences," edited by Joyce Farlow and Louise Barry.

The March, 1952, *Michigan History* contains a series of letters edited by Sidney Fine, with copious and valuable notes: "The Ely-Labadie Letters" dating from 1885 to 1906. "Jo" Labadie, a supporter of socialism, Greenbackism, the single tax, and philosophical anarchy, carried on a long correspondence with Richard T. Ely, prominent professor of economics at Johns Hopkins and the University of Wisconsin. Ely, in contrast to Labadie, was an advocate of the "cause of social reform as an antidote to the perils of laissez faire on the right and socialism on the left."

The American Navy played an important part on the rivers of the Middle West during the Civil War. Charles B. Hirsch has contributed an article on "Gunboat Personnel on the Western Waters" to the April, 1952, *Mid-America*.

The quarterly of the Minnesota Historical Society, *Minnesota History*, appeared in a new format with the Spring, 1952, issue. With larger pages, double columns, and many pictures, this new journal is both attractive and

readable. Articles in the issue include "Steamboating on Mississippi Headwaters," by Irving Harlow Hart; "People and Places in Old St. Paul," the reminiscences of Alice Monfort Dunn; "North Country Post Office," by Eva L. Alvey Richards; and "Settler's Periodical: Eugene Smalley and the Northwest Magazine," by Edgar C. Duin.

Frank L. Klement's article, "Middle Western Copperheadism and the Genesis of the Granger Movement," in the March, 1952, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* is of particular interest as a study of the background of the agrarian protest known as "Grangerism." Other articles in the issue are: "James K. Polk: A Study in Federal Patronage," by Norman A. Graebner; "Some Phases of the Compulsory Military Training Movement, 1914-1920," by Chase C. Mooney and Martha E. Layman; and "General William S. Rosecrans and the Mexican Transcontinental Railroad Project," by David M. Pletcher. The June, 1952, *Review* contains the following articles: "The Democratic Theme in American Historical Literature," by Merle Curti; "Southern Ohio and the Union in 1863," by Eugene H. Roseboom; "Rutherford B. Hayes, Educator," by Henry L. Swint; "The Northern Great Plains: A Study in Canadian-American Regionalism," by Paul F. Sharp; "Origins of Immigration Restriction, 1882-1897: A Social Analysis," by John Higham; and "Imprisonment for Debt in America: Fact and Fiction," by Edwin T. Randall.

"The Challenge of the Times to the Historian" (January, 1952, issue, *The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly*), is an essay by Carl Wittke of Western Reserve University, calling on historians to come out of their ivory towers, to teach better, to write better, to answer the need for "an historical approach to present-day problems," and thus to help allay modern fears. Carl Wittke also contributed a lively article on "Baseball in its Adolescence," to the April, 1952, *Quarterly*.

The powerful National Association of Manufacturers was founded at Cincinnati in 1895. A. K. Steigerwalt, Jr., has written on account of the founding of the NAM for the April, 1952, *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio*. Thomas D. Clark's article, "Early Accounts of Ohio Valley Settlement," in the same issue, contains much information on the printed sources of frontier Ohio and Kentucky life, together with stimulating comments by the author.

Historians, and all who read and study history, will find interest in John J. Van Nostrand's "The Historian as Teacher" in the May, 1952, *Pacific Historical Review*. Dr. Van Nostrand concludes his essay: "To this craftsman, history offers simply a point of view, a method for the solution of problems. The method demands a persistent and patient search for truth, a suspension of judgment pending the acquisition of all available truth, and a tolerance of other judgments no less fallible than my own. If one must relate the past to the present, and I know of no other reason for recollecting and reviving it, this is the time. In time of fear which blinds, seek the truth which clears the eye. In time of suspicion which makes little distinction between friend and foe, train the judgment which marks the battle lines, locates the enemy, and conserves strength until a telling blow can be struck. In time of prejudice, be tolerant."

Roy F. Nichols, in "English Origins of American Politics" in the January, 1952, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, points out the beginnings of the political ideas of America in the growing religious questioning which preceded the Reformation in sixteenth century England. "Anna Dickinson, Mark Twain, and Bret Harte," by James Harvey Young, appears in the same issue.

Of interest to railroad and agricultural historians will be an article in the December, 1951, *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*: "Railroad Promotion of Agriculture in Tennessee," by Jesse C. Burt, Jr., in which the author discusses the work of the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway from 1890 to 1918 in supporting progressive agriculture.

The *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (Winter, 1951) contains articles by Edwin E. Witte on "Labor in Wisconsin History"; by William H. Russell, on "Timothy O. Howe, Stalwart Republican"; and by Frank Klement, on "'Brick' Pomeroy: Copperhead and Curmudgeon." The Autumn, 1951, issue has the following articles of general interest: "J. I. Case: Some Experiences of an Early Wisconsin Industrialist," by Reynold M. Wik; "Early Rivalry Among Wisconsin Cities for Railroads," by Herbert W. Rice; and "La Follette and the Election of 1900: A Half-Century Reappraisal," by Robert S. Maxwell. The Spring, 1952, *Wisconsin Magazine of History* has several articles of general interest: "Lyman Copeland Draper, 1815-1891," by William B. Hesseltine; "Joseph H. Osborn, Grange Leader," by

Robert McCluggage; "Frederick Jackson Turner and the Chicago *Inter-Ocean*, 1885," by Fulmer Mood; and "Elisha W. Keyes and the Radical Republicans," by Richard W. Hantke.

### *Iowa*

Articles in the January, 1952, *Annals of Iowa* are: "When Railroads were Sought," by Ora Williams; an account written in 1914 by Col. Joseph H. Sweney entitled "Nursed a Wounded Brother," an account of service during the Civil War; "Variable Iowa Weather," by N. Tjernagle; and "Des Moines Street Transit," by W. F. McGlothlen. In the April, 1952, *Annals* are: "John A. Kasson — Early Contrasting Environments," by Edward Younger; "The Last Legislative Election of an Iowa U. S. Senator," by Leslie E. Francis; "The Mound Builders," by Thomas P. Christensen; and "Pioneer Foods and Water Supply," by N. Tjernagle.

An article of interest to Iowans appeared in the October, 1951, *Agricultural History*: "Smith Wildman Brookhart of Iowa: Insurgent Agrarian Politician," by Reinhard H. Luthin.

The Winter, 1952, *Iowa Law Review* is devoted to "A Symposium on Current Civil Liberties Problems," with articles by Osmond K. Fraenkel, John Edgar Hoover, Whitney R. Harris, and Walter L. Daykin.

The March, 1952, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* has an article by Leslie Hewes and Phillip E. Frandson: "Occupying the Wet Prairie: The Role of Artificial Drainage in Story County, Iowa."

Irving H. Hart of the faculty of Iowa State Teachers College at Cedar Falls has prepared a history of the school entitled *The First 75 Years*.

A brief history of Coe College, based on a story in the Coe College *Courier*, appeared in the December 23, 1951, Cedar Rapids *Gazette*. The history was compiled by Grace Hartzell Douma and Catherine Covert Stepanek.

Two articles on The Dolly, a branch-line Burlington Route passenger train which has ceased operation after eighty years, appeared in the Burlington *Hawkeye-Gazette* for February 12 and 13, 1952. R. T. Glenn is the author of these stories, which trace the development of this branch line —



which operated between Burlington and Galesburg via Oquawka, Aledo, and Galva — from its first organization in 1853, through its 15-year struggle to build the road, and its first operation in 1868, up to its recent abandonment. The road was known variously as the Western Airline Railroad and the American Central Railway, until it became part of the CB&Q.

The first football game west of the Mississippi was a contest in "Rugby football" between the State University of Iowa and Grinnell College in 1889. Grinnell won, 24-0. The story of one of the participants in this game, S. J. Pooley, a resident of Grinnell, appeared in the March 27, 1952, *Grinnell Herald*.

A series of articles on the Clarinda Presbyterian Church, written by Mrs. W. R. Bening, has appeared recently in the *Clarinda Herald-Journal*. The concluding article was published in the April 10, 1952, issue.

Mrs. W. E. Madson has compiled a series of articles on the history of Hawarden which have been published in the March and April issues of the *Hawarden Independent*.

The first radio broadcasting station in central Iowa was a "twenty-watt outfit" built by W. H. Fowler, at Pella. This was in 1921. The following year he helped to establish the first station in Des Moines, a "fifty-watt outfit" on top of the Register and Tribune building. The story of these early days of radio broadcasting was written by Herb Owens for the *Des Moines Tribune* and was reprinted in the *Knoxville Express* for May 15, 1952.

Robert Schmidt contributed a story on Sioux City bicycling illustrated with old and new pictures of "bikes" to the June 1, 1952, issue of the *Sioux City Journal*.

The *Augusta* was "one of the busiest ferry boats connecting Illinois and Iowa during the last half of the nineteenth century," according to a story in the February 28, 1952, *Clinton Herald*. The article is accompanied by a picture of the *Augusta* and of her pilot and captain, Thomas Burns. Another ferry boat story, that of the *John Taylor* which ran between Burlington and Henderson County, Illinois, appeared in the February 25, 1952, *Burlington Hawkeye-Gazette*.

The Ackworth Friends Church observed its centennial on June 1, 1952. A brief history of the church, together with a picture, appeared in the May 22, 1952, *Indianola Record Herald*.

How Iowans met a Missouri River flood in 1881 is told in the June 5, 1952, *Onawa Democrat*. The story is a reprint of the report of the flood which was originally printed in the *Monona County Gazette* for April 28, 1881.

The June 12, 1952, *Waterloo Courier* published a short history of St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church of Denver, Iowa, which celebrated its 90th birthday June 15, 1952.

The Cedar Rapids *Gazette* has instituted a series of articles on the newspapers of that area. The first article, "Weekly Newspapers Are an American Institution," by Jean Strong, appeared in the June 15, 1952, issue. Loyal Meek contributed the story of the Tama *News-Herald* to the June 22 issue of the *Gazette*.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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# THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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# IOWA

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COVER

"Des Moines, Iowa. From Capitol Hill, 1857." This picture, which is probably a very romanticized view of Des Moines in the year that John A. Kasson arrived, is taken from the frontispiece of a rare book, H. B. Turrill, *Historical Reminiscences of the City of Des Moines* (Des Moines, 1857).

# THE RISE OF JOHN A. KASSON IN IOWA POLITICS, 1857-1859\*

*By Edward Younger*

Within less than four years John A. Kasson, a newcomer, arose from the status of an unknown lawyer to become one of Iowa's leading politicians and Abraham Lincoln's assistant postmaster general. His swift political ascent must be attributed in part to his native ability, fine training, and broad experience. In 1857 when, at the age of thirty-five, he turned up at the little village of Des Moines, he stood above many of his Iowa contemporaries in education and breadth of experience. He was already a seasoned lawyer and politician, thoroughly familiar with third party activities and the disrupting sectional issues then prevailing.

Born and reared in Vermont, he had graduated from the University of Vermont, an institution then noted for its brilliant faculty and broad curriculum. For a year thereafter he had tutored the children of a Virginia planter; for a year he had studied law at Worcester, Massachusetts; for six years he had practiced law and dabbled in Free Soil politics at the old whaling port of New Bedford, Massachusetts; and for almost seven years immediately preceding his arrival in Iowa he had practiced law and played politics among border state men in St. Louis.

Over the years the New England granite in Kasson's personality had been softened. He was "polished in speech and manners," "conservative in his instincts, of fine presence and genial ways," and urbane. His urbanity was the trait to be repeatedly ascribed to him in Iowa and a trait which was to do him no good among many of the minor politicians. He was a "finished" public speaker. His eloquence rang out over the Iowa prairies and "brought

\*This article is based on the author's research for a full-length biography of John Adam Kasson. In support of his research on Kasson, the author has received grants from the University of Virginia Institute for Research in the Social Sciences and from the Richmond Area University Center. The author is indebted to Leland Sage for the privilege of reading pertinent chapters in the latter's manuscript biography of William Boyd Allison. For articles by the author on Kasson's early life, see "The Education of John A. Kasson," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY*, 49:289-310 (October, 1951), and "John A. Kasson, Early Contrasting Environments," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 31:241-62 (April, 1952).



strength to the party and credit to himself." Among the many newcomers who would contest with him for position and power, he was "the mightiest, most stately of all." He was "colorful." He possessed "remarkable constructive capacities."<sup>1</sup> He also possessed an independence of spirit and action, which in time was to become a political liability. But despite his undoubted intelligence, diligence, competence, and refinement, his rapid rise to political prominence must be attributed also in part to significant political and economic developments taking place particularly in Des Moines and generally in the state of Iowa and the nation.

Until 1850 Iowa's population, institutions, and government had been predominantly southern. Until 1854 she had been a Democratic stronghold. But in the decade of the fifties railroads, land companies, and eastern newspapers advertised the fertile prairie soil so well that Iowa became a household word. As railroads reached the eastern river towns, connecting the trans-Mississippi West with the Old Northwest and the East, wave after wave of immigrants rolled in, mostly from northern states and Europe. In this single decade the population increased more than 250 per cent. By 1860 less than a third were native Iowans. Ohio sent the greatest number, followed respectively by Indiana, Pennsylvania, New York, and Illinois. Immigrants from Virginia and Kentucky outnumbered those from the six New England states, and undoubtedly a great many from the southern part of the Old Northwest and from Western Pennsylvania were of southern antecedents.

By 1857 the frontier line had been pushed back so far that only the northwest third remained a raw, unsettled prairie. The thickest settlements were in the eastern third. In the southern half, along the Missouri border, and in some of the southwestern and western counties of the interior, men with southern backgrounds prevailed. Northerners tended to gravitate to the northern and eastern counties inhabiting the fast growing towns and cities along the Mississippi.

This Great Migration of the fifties did not make Iowa a pro-northern state. Nor had the predominance of southerners prior to 1850 made her pro-southern. But the Great Migration did create a climate favorable to

<sup>1</sup> John J. Halloran, "Pioneer Bench and Bar," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 25: 47-8 (July, 1943); "Men of a Frontier Town," *ibid.*, 27:248 (January, 1946); H. C. Evans, "At Washington," *Dubuque Herald*, Nov. 24, 1895; "Iowa's '57 Variety," *Iowa Magazine Section of Oskaloosa Times-Globe*, March 27, 1924; C. C. Cole in *Des Moines Register and Leader*, April 9, 1911.

rapid political change. And the impact of northerner with southerner produced a society first of all western. Western predominance in national affairs will surely come, predicted an Iowa editor as he watched the tide of immigrants swell.

The immigrant brought business for the merchant and the banker. He enriched the land and the town-lot speculator. He subscribed to the newspapers of town and country editors. He bought goods from the budding manufacturer. He plowed up the soil, produced grain and meat, and his demands for better transportation were sweet music to the railroad promoter. He patronized the lawyer and brought votes and power to the politician who might be a lawyer, a land speculator, a businessman, or a combination of all these. Let there be more immigrants! was the cry.

The emerging ruling class of the fifties in Iowa — lawyers, editors, businessmen — were energetic, dynamic, and aggressive. They demanded free homesteads, home industries, better transportation to the East, South, and Far West, and a greater voice in the national government so vital to the realization of their aspirations. They were nationalists and could readily identify their interests with those of the nation. They would cast aside either easterner or southerner, whichever stood in their way or in the way of national development. The Democratic party had been preferred until the mid-fifties in part because it seemed national.

Southerners, whether from the South or from the southern half of the Old Northwest, were tolerant of slavery and detested abolitionists and Negro equality. But the influential opposed the extension of slavery. Some of the northerners were indifferent to slavery, many mildly disliked it, but only a few violently opposed it in any form, anywhere. Most were content to let it alone where it was, but opposed its spread beyond the Missouri Compromise line. Whether from the North or South, a potent group could be welded together against slavery extension.<sup>2</sup>

Iowans had supported the Mexican War enthusiastically, had remained steadfastly Democratic in the sectional crisis of '48, and both Whigs and Democrats had accepted the Compromise of 1850. In 1852 Whig defeat

<sup>2</sup> F. I. Herriott, "Whence Came the Pioneers of Iowa?" *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 7:367-79, 446-65 (April, July, 1906), and "Iowa and the First Nomination of Abraham Lincoln," *ibid.*, 8:195-202 (October, 1907); Henry Clyde Hubbart, "'Pro-Southern' Influences in the Free West, 1840-1865," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 20:45-62 (June, 1933); D. S. Sparks, "The Republican Party in Iowa, 1848-1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1951), 59-109, 178;

had been so overwhelming that this party rapidly disintegrated, leaving stranded a number of competent and potentially powerful leaders without a party. The Democracy then seemed firmly entrenched.

But two years later Douglas' Kansas-Nebraska Bill, for which both of Iowa's Democratic Senators voted, produced, perhaps unexpectedly, a sudden political and moral reaction. Antislavery Whigs took a new lease on life under the able management of James W. Grimes, a well-to-do lawyer and owner of real estate, from the Mississippi River town of Burlington.

Grimes was a native of New Hampshire and a graduate of Dartmouth. He had been a consistent Whig since youth, and for a decade a conspicuous and forceful Whig leader in Iowa as a member of the legislature, a champion of railroad development, and an outspoken opponent of slavery extension. Possessing great natural ability, he was courageous, a good judge of men, and above all an astute politician.<sup>3</sup>

At the Whig state convention in 1854, antislavery elements seized the initiative, nominated Grimes for governor, and put through a strong resolution condemning the extension of slavery. In an aggressive campaign Grimes struck out to consolidate all antislavery groups, to absorb the Know-Nothings without their principles, to detach the German vote from the Democrats, and to win new recruits through a broad appeal to local and western interests. It was a frontal attack upon the Democrats on many fronts. First persuading Free Soilers to withdraw their candidate and endorse his ticket, he then vigorously stumped the state from corner to corner, slashing out against repeal of the Missouri Compromise and emphasizing the practical aspects of such repeal. Iowans, hemmed in on the south and west by slave states, would be in a constant furor from slave hunts and Underground Railroad operations, he told the voters. Their energies would be paralyzed and their internal improvements would languish.

By supporting a referendum on liquor control, he attracted the strong

Cardinal Goodwin, "The American Occupation of Iowa, 1833 to 1860," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 17:83-102 (January, 1919); William J. Petersen, "Population Advance to the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1830-1860," *ibid.*, 32:312-53 (October, 1934); Dan E. Clark, "The Westward Movement in the Upper Mississippi Valley During the Fifties," *Proceedings*, Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 7:212-19 (1913-1914).

<sup>3</sup> William Salter, *The Life of James W. Grimes* . . . (New York, 1876); sketch of Grimes by Benj. F. Shambaugh in *Dictionary of American Biography*, 7:631-2; Sparks "Republican Party in Iowa . . ." 42-72.



temperance bloc to his banner. He advocated free homesteads, a state banking system, government aid for railroads, and the extension of public schools. He appealed both to the self-interest and the pride of foreign immigrants, mostly Germans: the Democratic party, the party of slavery, would restrict their right to vote and to share equally in the national domain. Politicians in the South preferred to have Iowa filled with Negro slaves rather than with intelligent, freedom-loving Germans.

Grimes's close victory can be attributed to his own energy and astuteness, to Democratic overconfidence and lethargy, to the German vote, the temperance vote, and to his clever appeal to every economic interest in the state. Though slavery as a moral issue was secondary, the issue of its extension had been squarely met. His victory in a state considered as a hotbed of "dough faces" was a national surprise and elicited congratulations from leading Republicans such as Chase of Ohio. Grimes became a national figure.

As governor, he extended the power of government into many fields. Under his administration a new constitution was adopted, repealing measures restricting corporations. A state banking system was established, educational reforms effected, railroad construction encouraged, and long-sought railroad grants obtained from the federal government.

At the same time the Governor kept up a running correspondence with politicians, both old and new comers, in almost every county in the state. As violence flared up in Kansas, as sectional passions hardened in Washington, as one disquieting state election followed another in Iowa, sometimes two and three in one year, more and more antislavery men drifted into the Grimes camp, and a leavening of antislavery radicalism began to work, though practical politics required that it be kept submerged. Know-Nothings, making little headway under their own steam but centering their attack on the Democrats, gravitated toward the fusionists.

Early in 1856 a mass of delegates assembled in Iowa City to organize the new movement; to harmonize conflicting groups; and, in the end, to give formal birth to the Republican party in Iowa. Many newcomers, some in the state for only a year or two, took leading parts.

This convention, filled with enthusiastic delegates, may be interpreted in part as a spontaneous, popular uprising against slavery. But viewed in perspective, one sees behind it also the practical political guidance of Grimes, ably assisted by such men as James Harlan, James F. Wilson, and Samuel J.



Kirkwood, who should share with Grimes the laurels of fathering the party.<sup>4</sup>

Harlan, hailing from Indiana, a prominent educator and Methodist, could infuse a strong moral earnestness with practical politics. Already, in 1855, he had been chosen United States Senator.<sup>5</sup> Wilson, a newcomer from Ohio, clean-cut and handsome now at the age of twenty-eight, was in the words of Grimes "a 'sing'd cat' . . . prudent, cautious, sagacious and if he has a mind that way, can be eloquent . . . a good politician."<sup>6</sup> Kirkwood, another newcomer from Ohio, a friend of Salmon P. Chase and suffused with Republicanism in John Sherman's hometown of Mansfield, possessed a wagon full of homespun virtues and was good at rough and tumble debate.<sup>7</sup>

The delicate task of welding together Old Whigs, temperance men, Know-Nothings, German-Americans, Free Soilers, and anti-Nebraska Democrats was accomplished under a single platform dedicated against the extension of slavery. In the summer elections the young, aggressive party won victory after victory by impressive majorities, electing their state ticket, winning control of the legislature, capturing the two congressional seats, and carrying the state for Fremont in the presidential contest.

But during the year 1857, the year of Kasson's arrival, Republican majorities were whittled down, and resurging Democrats won back some of the state offices. As the Dred Scott Decision failed to catch on as a political issue, the conviction grew that Kansas was bleeding only for the benefit of Republican politicians. The Iowa City platform, devoted exclusively to

<sup>4</sup> On the origin and early history of the Republican party in Iowa: B. F. Gue, *History of Iowa* . . . (4 vols., New York, 1903), 1:274ff; three articles in *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS* by Louis Pelzer: "The Origin and Organization of the Republican Party in Iowa," 4:487-525 (October, 1906); "The History and Principles of the Democratic Party of Iowa, 1846-1857," 6:163-246 (April, 1908); "The History of Political Parties in Iowa from 1857 to 1860," 7:179-229 (April, 1909). See also John W. Gannaway, "The Development of Party Organization in Iowa," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 1:493-524 (October, 1903); Charles Roll, "Political Trends in Iowa History," *ibid.*, 26:499-519 (October, 1928); Dan Elbert Clark, "The History of Liquor Legislation in Iowa, 1846-1861," *ibid.*, 6:55-87 (January, 1908); F. I. Herriott, "James W. Grimes versus the Southrons," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 15:323-57, 403-432 (July, October, 1926); Sparks, "Republican Party in Iowa . . .," 72-150.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson Brigham, *James Harlan* (Iowa City, 1913); sketch of Harlan by E. D. Ross in *Dictionary of American Biography*, 8:268-9.

<sup>6</sup> James W. Grimes to C. C. Carpenter, Nov. 30, 1857, in "Letters of James W. Grimes," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 22:489 (October, 1940).

<sup>7</sup> Dan Elbert Clark, *Samuel Jordan Kirkwood* (Iowa City, 1917).

slavery, and the Fremont platform, two-thirds of which concerned the same issue, were too radical for Iowa voters. In the April elections for minor state offices, the Democrats won two out of three contests. In the October elections the Republican-sponsored new state constitution, providing for a state banking system and fewer restrictions on corporations, carried by a small majority. But the voters emphatically rejected, 6 to 1, a clause providing for Negro suffrage.<sup>8</sup>

In the governor's race shaping up for October — the third election of this year — Republican leaders showed anxiety. To keep the party "consolidated" Grimes repeatedly urged systematic organization. Though condemning the Dred Scott Decision and the events in Kansas, Republicans campaigned on a platform broader than that of '56 and vigorously defended the economic legislation of the Grimes administration. As a candidate for governor they nominated Ralph P. Lowe, a mild-mannered, moderate ex-Whig and ex-Ohioan from Keokuk. For lieutenant governor they chose a man of German ancestry to attract naturalized voters who feared the party might be dominated by Know-Nothings.

The campaign showed a tendency toward personal scandalmongering and revealed among public officials a highly dangerous laxity of morals, such as defalcation and bribery. Lowe was charged with being a spiritualist and with having consorted with the Know-Nothings at Keokuk. An alleged love affair of the candidate for lieutenant governor was aired out.

Though Lowe and his running mate won, and the Republicans increased their control of the legislature, several local areas, like Grimes's hometown of Burlington, fell to the Democrats. Primarily Lowe had won because the Democrats could not get out their vote. Thus, when John A. Kasson appeared on the scene late in 1857, there was still much consolidating and organizing to be done before Iowa could be made *safely* Republican.

But the mounting tensions in the land were to make such work easier. In October, Iowans read that at the Lecompton convention in Kansas intensely proslavery men had rammed through a constitution making slavery a permanent institution in an area becoming daily more intensely antislavery. This news, coming at a time when the speculative bubble was yielding to an

<sup>8</sup> New York *Tribune Almanac*, 2:62 (1858); Gue, *History of Iowa* . . ., 1:351-5; Carl H. Erbe, "Constitutional Provisions for the Suffrage in Iowa," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 22:163-216 (April, 1924); Sparks, "The Republican Party in Iowa . . .," 154ff.

aggravating depression and heralding the coming of a great revival in religion, infused an increasing moral element in politics.<sup>9</sup> Young and positive Republican leaders, motivated by a combination of morals, economics, and the desire for political power, and representing the aggressive demands arising from the nation's rapid growth, stood ready to cast aside what they considered the negative rule of the Democracy as this party showed dangerous signs of splitting into two wings — southern and northern.

Des Moines in 1857 was a shabby town of less than 4,000 people, located in south-central Iowa between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, and associated politically with the southwestern third of the state. It straddled the Des Moines River near the junction of the inflowing Raccoon. In territorial days a sleepy frontier military outpost, it had become, after statehood in 1846, a county-seat town and in the early fifties a trading center for immigrants bound for California and for settlers pouring into the surrounding territory. It was severely isolated by bad roads and hazardous shallow-draft steamboating on the Des Moines River, which provided an uncertain outlet through Keokuk to the Mississippi and St. Louis.

Kasson, for instance, on the last leg of his journey from St. Louis, had to travel for "two days and nights" over muddy roads and swollen streams in a "mud wagon" built especially with large wheels and broad tires for quagmire tracks. When the "mudder" became stalled in Skunk Bottom a few miles east of Des Moines, he had to slog through the mire to higher ground carrying in his arms an old lady passenger. Two miles east of town the wagon broke down, and Kasson trudged on in tediously through the mud.<sup>10</sup>

Inside the town men hurried here and there with their trousers "tucked in boots and boots generally tucked in mud." Across the river in East Des Moines, "all [was] rude, with stumps of trees, perilous ravines, and walks made of coal slack. . . . Boarding houses on streets were indicated by surveyors' stakes, or by a path through mud of various consistency."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Letters of James W. Grimes," 477, 481; Herriott, "Iowa and First Nomination of Lincoln," 202-203; Pelzer, "History of Political Parties in Iowa . . .," 179-229.

<sup>10</sup> Kasson's own biographical sketch, *Kasson Papers* (State Department of History and Archives, Des Moines, Iowa); "Kasson's Word Pictures," *Des Moines Daily Capitol*, Magazine Section, World's Fair Edition (1904); Kenneth E. Colton, "Stagecoach Travel in Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 22:175-200 (January, 1940).

<sup>11</sup> Kasson's speech before Old Settlers Reunion, unidentified newspaper clipping in *Kasson Papers*; Josiah Bushnell Grinnell, *Men and Events of Forty Years . . .* (Boston, 1891), 122-3; R. H. Patchin, "An Old Fashioned Man from Iowa," *Sioux City Journal*, June 9, 1907.



But what Des Moines lacked in improvements she balanced off with a soaring ambition. And despite the depression then hovering over the land, her residents had good cause for optimism. In the August elections the new, Republican-sponsored state constitution had been adopted, fixing the capital in their midst. And even as Kasson settled down into new quarters, ten oxen hitched to two bobsleds were dragging the state safe and other valuables from Iowa City, the old capital in the eastern part of the state, one hundred twenty miles away.

The new state capital was preparing for the inauguration of a new Republican governor and the installation of a Republican legislature. Building was rampant, and the noise of hammer and saw waked people early at morning and late at night as commercial buildings and shanties went up by the dozens. Real estate men on the east side of the Des Moines River, having won the bitter and scandalous contest against West Siders for the capitol site, were rushing up at their own expense a new capitol building. Things whirled fast and men were dizzy with schemes as railroad promoters, land seekers, town-lot speculators, settlers, and politicians crowded into town.<sup>12</sup>

While the center of political gravity shifted to this small town, the scepter of political power was falling from the hands of the old into the hands of the new. A new order was supplanting the old — a new order in which as yet there were no serious factions and few controlling leaders. An individualistic, free-for-all competition was shaping up in which aspiring leaders, many of them newcomers like Kasson, and most of them young men, united with each other for common cause and victory and vied with each other for respect, position, power, wealth, and points of view. Out of this competition were to arise future leaders of state and nation.

Kasson identified himself with the interests and problems of Des Moines, made friends easily, and immediately was recognized as a talented civic leader and speaker. He had barely scraped the mud from his boots when the newly organized Literary Institute invited him to give the first lecture of the season. He was put on a committee of West Siders to set up a reading room and library. On patriotic occasions, becoming ever more popular

<sup>12</sup> Other works used on the Des Moines background: Howard J. Nelson, "The Economic Development of Des Moines," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY*, 48:193-220 (July, 1950); J. M. Dixon, *Centennial History of Polk County, Iowa* (Des Moines, 1876), 138-9; F. M. Mills, "Early Commercial Travelling in Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 11:328-35 (April, 1914); Tacitus Hussey, "History of Steamboating on the Des Moines River . . .," *ibid.*, 4:323-82 (April, 1900).



as emotions from the sectional crisis welled up, he tingled the pulses of a people strongly devoted to the Union.

Though his "most excellent" speech before the Literary Institute — entitled "Lectures, Lecturers, and Lecturing" — was well attended, a local editor criticized contemporary lecturers generally for not giving the audience something "real and practical" rather than a "flowing sentence, a finely rounded period." Though Kasson and his committee performed a "labor of love" by generously fitting up the reading room with books and periodicals, the dearth of readers, preoccupied with more exciting activities, proved disappointing.<sup>13</sup>

After two months of orientation, Kasson's reputation was sufficient to give him a place of prominence in the welcome this busy little town extended to the new state government. In early January, 1858, Des Moines citizens and a multitude of strangers celebrated the coming of the new state officers with a grand Inaugural Festival, "western in style." Eight hundred guests crowded into the new Representative Hall to hear toasts and to be served refreshments by Des Moines ladies. Of the thirteen regular toasts Kasson responded to one given to the Patriots of the Revolution. Eventually the guests spilled out into the Senate Chamber, the promenade room, for music and dancing. At a late hour, omnibuses, "four-wheeled and four-horse," just recently arrived from Dubuque, bore the tired merrymakers home. A little later, Kasson no doubt was present at the grand reception given by Grimes to the state legislature and other notables in appreciation of his election to the United States Senate.<sup>14</sup>

The next month at the "brilliant" Washington's Birthday Banquet, Kasson presided in the most "happy and dignified manner." The band played patriotic music, and Kasson from the head of the center table, "in an admirable style," read out popular toasts, expressing thoughts foremost in the minds of his listeners: "The West: Today the Frontier, Tomorrow the Center; Old Settlers of Iowa: May They Live to See the Buffalo Tracks Obliterated by Railroad Tracks! Railroads: The Iron Wedlock of Agri-

<sup>13</sup> Des Moines *Iowa State Journal*, Dec. 5, 12, 1857; Jan. 2, Feb. 19, 1858; Johnson Brigham, *History of Des Moines and Polk County . . .* (2 vols., Chicago, 1911), 1:167. P. M. Casady, a prominent Democrat and to become an intimate personal friend of Kasson, was president of the Literary Institute. Hoyt Sherman, brother of John and William Tecumseh, was a member of the reading room committee.

<sup>14</sup> Des Moines *Iowa State Journal*, Jan. 9, 1858; Des Moines *Iowa Citizen*, Jan. 14, 16, 1858; Brigham, *History of Des Moines . . .*, 1:162.

culture and Commerce! Union of the States: A Few Matrimonial Dissensions Don't Justify Divorce!" At the end of the banquet, pretty ladies joined solemn legislators in a half hour promenade in which newcomers met old comers. Dancing then followed until three in the morning.<sup>15</sup>

When Des Moines ladies several months later organized a unit of the Ladies Association of the Union to purchase Mt. Vernon, the home of Washington, Kasson, with a "reputation as a lecturer and orator" now firmly established, was the main attraction at the fund-raising meeting. His oration on the first president and his Potomac River home was described as a "fine literary and historical production" — "a great auxiliary" in bringing in desired funds.<sup>16</sup>

In the pulsing life of the new capital Kasson also won quick standing as a competent lawyer. During his first year's practice the *Iowa Reports* show him appearing before the state supreme court as frequently as the other leaders of the mushrooming Des Moines Bar. In a majority of the cases appealed, he was the victor.<sup>17</sup> By the middle of his second year, his practice extended as far northwest as Sioux City where he successfully defended Woodbury County's refusal to honor the issues of certain bogus warrants. An appreciative Democratic editor of Sioux City thought Kasson's "high toned and gentlemanly character" combined with his "able and successful" management before the court won him a "host of admiring friends" and established for him an "enviable reputation" as a lawyer.<sup>18</sup> In his third year of Des Moines residence, Kasson was one of the half dozen lawyers, including the governor and attorney general, chosen to speak before the

<sup>15</sup> Des Moines *Iowa Citizen*, Feb. 25, 1858; Des Moines *Iowa State Journal*, Feb. 24, 1858; Brigham, *History of Des Moines . . .*, 1:162.

<sup>16</sup> Des Moines *Iowa Statesman*, Jan. 13, 1859; Brigham, *History of Des Moines . . .*, 1:171.

<sup>17</sup> See Clarke *Iowa Reports*, Vols. VI-VII, Cole, *ibid.*, Vol. VIII, and Withrow, *ibid.*, Vols. IX-XII. Associated with Kasson in law cases from time to time were J. E. Jewett, a brother-in-law and later law partner of Samuel J. Kirkwood; D. O. Finch, life-long Democrat and later political adversary of Kasson; Thomas Withrow, young Republican lawyer and politician from Virginia and Wisconsin; and C. C. Cole, another prominent Democrat. Other Des Moines colleagues were P. M. Casady, C. C. Nourse, and M. M. Crocker.

<sup>18</sup> Des Moines *Campaign State Journal*, Aug. 18, 1859, quoting the *Sioux City Register*; for more details on this case, in which Judge Test of Indiana was Kasson's opponent, see F. I. Herriott, "Judge Orlando C. Howe," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 19:172, 308 (January, April, 1934).

supreme court upon the death of one of its members. His brief speech is somewhat in contrast with the others because of its fine polish, breadth of legal view, and humanness. Law, which "too often strengthens the intellect at the expense of the heart," should combine "justice in the broad and natural sense" with "justice according to law," he admonished the attentive bar members.<sup>19</sup>

When hard-working farmer clients, destitute of money during the depression years, came to Kasson, he won their lasting friendship by accepting their farm produce as fees. He employed young law students in his office, drafted a child adoption law for a client and the legislature, defended an unpopular judge for appropriating money for an expensive county courthouse, and, at a railroad meeting, favored the Mississippi and Missouri company.<sup>20</sup>

And he was in the favorable position of having brought from St. Louis, during this period when money was so scarce, enough cash to lend out at a lucrative interest rate. F. M. Mills, a young Indiana shoemaker, turning printer upon reaching Des Moines, borrowed the money from Kasson with which to construct his publishing house, presumably at the "standard rate" of 40 per cent. The first book Mills published was one edited by Kasson — *The Civil Code of Iowa*. Kasson in turn prepared many of the young printer's blank forms to be used in supplying the needs of the county and state offices.<sup>21</sup>

It was altogether fitting that Republican politicians would become interested in this striking and energetic young stranger, and Governor Lowe was one of the first to become attracted to him. The inaugural ceremonies were barely over when the Governor found his and Grimes's preceding administration faced with a number of embarrassing scandals, such as bribery in the location of the capitol site, defalcation of school funds, and expensive, haphazard administration of the state government. Both the Governor and

<sup>19</sup> Withrow *Iowa Reports*, X, 599-600. The deceased member of the State Supreme Court was Judge L. D. Stockton.

<sup>20</sup> Kasson's biographical sketch, *Kasson Papers*. Among the young law students was George W. Bassett of Fort Dodge, later state senator. See *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 2:405-406 (April, 1896). The child adoption law was drafted for Ira Cook of Des Moines. See *ibid.*, 4:550 (October, 1900). On the courthouse case and the M. & M. RR meeting, see *Des Moines Iowa Statesman*, Aug. 12, Dec. 2, 1858.

<sup>21</sup> Mills, "Early Commercial Travelling in Iowa," 328-35; "F. M. Mills Writes of Kasson," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 12:610-13 (April, 1921).



the Republican legislature, which Grimes described as the "most *investigating*"<sup>22</sup> one he had ever seen, were put on the defensive.

The capitol site investigation grew out of the fierce struggle between East Siders and West Siders for the capitol building. Before Kasson reached Des Moines, the five commissioners appointed to select the exact site had decided in favor of East Siders. Enraged West Siders, claiming to have offered the state more land and money, hired Kasson as their attorney, filed a protest with the legislature, and demanded an investigation. The legislature responded with a special committee whose majority report, based upon investigation, found the commissioners guilty of not having acted "in strict regard with the interests of the entire state." Though committee members lamented their lack of power to bring out all the testimony, they unanimously condemned one commissioner — named Pegram — for accepting a bribe.<sup>23</sup>

While this scandal was coming to a head, the state superintendent of public instruction had been dismissed for defalcation of funds. This discredited official had loaned out school funds indiscriminately, some for personal speculation and some to certain East Siders who had obligated themselves to erect the capitol building at their own expense. The amount of the arrears remained undetermined upon Lowe's inauguration.

Confronted with obvious laxity, decreasing revenues, and mounting expenses, the legislature empowered the governor to appoint a committee of three to investigate the state executive offices and recommend reform. Lowe responded immediately by making Kasson chairman — a position of unusual importance and responsibility for one who had been in the state less than a year.

Kasson's committee made a searching investigation of the methods, files, and accounts of the several state offices. The report, reading as if Kasson wrote it, was thorough, systematic, and extensive. Account books of the lax state superintendent were found to be completely unreliable, filled with alterations and erasures. In order to recover the shortage of more than

<sup>22</sup> Grimes to Kirkwood, March 11, 1858, in "Letters of James W. Grimes," 494; Herriott, "Iowa and First Nomination of Lincoln," 213; Ivan L. Pollock, "State Finances in Iowa During the Civil War," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 16: 53-107 (January, 1918).

<sup>23</sup> Jacob A. Swisher, "The Capitols at Des Moines," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 39:52-87 (January, 1941); L. F. Andrews, *Pioneers of Polk County, Iowa . . .* (2 vols., Des Moines, 1908), 1:217-26.



\$70,000, the report recommended an immediate suit against the guilty official and his bondsmen who were circulating petitions to relieve themselves from obligation.

In the rest of the state offices (the important auditor and treasury offices, for instance), the committee found a dearth of poorly-kept records, even of incoming revenues and disbursements. From the governor's office on down, no archival system existed for the preservation of official records. The committee's recommendations are said to have "worked a revolution" eventually in methods of accounting and the preservation of official documents.<sup>24</sup>

Thus Kasson played the role of a "specialist" in government administration a half century before the term was to become familiar in American history. And thus he found himself in a position to be constructive while becoming, at the same time through his activities as an investigator, a real power in the Republican party of Iowa.

Early in 1858 light snow flurries and soft autumn air gave way to wintry blasts and sub-zero temperature, reminiscent of Kasson's boyhood in Vermont.<sup>25</sup> Governor Grimes in a farewell address, as he stepped down from office, gave the voters a "blizzard" on Dred Scott, Kansas, and the "centralizing influence of the central government." In his inaugural address Governor Lowe excoriated the Buchanan administration. In the legislature Senator Kirkwood helped press through a resolution condemning the Dred Scott Decision. In the spring incessant wet weather and cold nights brought on disastrous crop failures extending over two-thirds of the state and aggravating the economic distress already prevailing from the depression.<sup>26</sup>

Having won the senatorship and returned to Burlington, Grimes grew alarmed at Republican prospects. In the "investigating" legislature, with "too much loquacity" and "too many *great men*," Republicans would be driven to inactivity by the Democrats, he feared. Passage of the Lecompton

<sup>24</sup> F. I. Herriott, "The Republican State Convention . . . 1860," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 9:433 (July-October, 1910); and "The Preservation of Iowa's Public Documents," *ibid.*, 5:293-306 (January, 1902); Thomas Teakle, "The Defalcation of Superintendent James D. Eads," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 12:205-244 (April, 1914).

<sup>25</sup> Des Moines *Iowa State Journal*, Nov. 11, Dec. 26, 1857; Des Moines *Iowa Citizen*, Feb. 10, 1858.

<sup>26</sup> Grimes to Kirkwood, Dec. 15, 1857, in "Letters of James W. Grimes," 491; Pelzer, "History of Political Parties in Iowa . . .," 179-229; Gue, *History of Iowa* . . ., 1:362-9.

Bill in Washington "will be the only thing that can save our party," he apprehensively wrote Kirkwood.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile the political pots boiled briskly in Des Moines as plans were laid for the state convention to be held in Iowa City in early summer. With the state government now located in Des Moines, some of her citizens, many of them newcomers, were in a favorable position to become real political forces in the state. Governor Lowe, seeking to steady and direct his administration, found himself relying heavily on local talent. In addition to Kasson, whose influence was growing phenomenally, the Governor, for instance, chose as his private secretary twenty-five-year-old Thomas Withrow, a Virginian from Kanawha County, who had spent two years in Wisconsin before turning up in Des Moines to practice law.<sup>28</sup> Withrow and other young politicians to appear later in this story saw in Kasson a rising star and champion whom for several reasons they could accept and promote, at least temporarily. Kasson in turn, as yet unwary and not lacking in ambition himself, became an eager recipient of such support.

When the state convention adjourned in Iowa City, many Republicans must have expressed surprise at the name of a rank stranger — John A. Kasson — who had been made chairman of the state central committee to conduct the critical elections of the next year.

Two other members of the seven-man committee — Thomas Seeley and H. M. Hoxie — came from the Des Moines area. Seeley, Kasson's colleague on the three-man committee set up by Governor Lowe to investigate the state offices, was from Guthrie County, a few miles west of Des Moines. Hoxie, who like Withrow was to become a significant influence in Kasson's career, was from Des Moines. A fourth member, Nicholas J. Rusch from the Davenport area, was put on the committee to represent German-Americans. One each of the other three members was chosen from Dubuque in the northeast, from Iowa City in the central east, and from Mount Pleasant, the home of Senator Harlan, in the southeast.<sup>29</sup>

As committee chairman, Kasson would have to assume the principal burden of planning and directing the crucial summer and fall campaigns of 1859, in which the important offices of governor, lieutenant governor, and

<sup>27</sup> Grimes to Kirkwood, March 6, 11, 1858, in "Letters of James W. Grimes," 493-4.

<sup>28</sup> Gue, *History of Iowa* . . . , 4:292.

<sup>29</sup> Pelzer, "History of Political Parties in Iowa . . .," 179-229.

three supreme court justices would be at stake. His duties would bring him into intimate contact with party leaders, involving extensive conferences, correspondence, and public speaking. He would become apprised of the ambitions of various politicians and factions, and party success could well depend upon the chairman's ability to harmonize internal conflicts. In this position Kasson could serve the party and at the same time achieve experience, recognition, and contacts so vital to his own future political success.

While he awaited the assumption of his duties, the old committee, headed by Grimes's right-hand man, Samuel J. Kirkwood, conducted the summer and fall contests of 1858 for minor state offices and Iowa's two congressional seats. These campaigns lacked the enthusiasm and excitement previously demonstrated by the Republicans. Kansas lost ground as a rallying issue; Dred Scott was poor political bait. For his lack of organization and activity Kirkwood was later criticized. And though the Republican slate won, the contests were dangerously close. Majorities for some offices were reduced from previous years despite a great increase in the number of immigrant voters from northern states and Europe. Worse still, Republican control of the state legislature was gradually being whittled down. Even the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates in neighboring Illinois elicited only languid interest in Iowa, though both Lincoln and Douglas made speeches at Burlington.<sup>30</sup>

Early in 1859 when the new committee took over, Democrats had a number of reasons to be confident and Republicans to be anxious. From Washington came news that harmony was being restored between the Buchanan and Douglas factions. Iowa Republicans heard rumors of vast sums of money to be spent in behalf of Democratic candidates. Democratic managers hoped to capitalize upon Republican scandals and financial embarrassments in the state administration, while Republicans, finding themselves on the defensive, feared public apathy and party indifference. A reaction against Republicanism appeared to have set in; a lull in public indignation over the slavery issue prevailed; commercial interests were opposing further agitation; and the churches were balking at an extreme position.

Moreover, Iowa's foreign-born voters were questioning Republican poli-

<sup>30</sup> Grimes to Kirkwood, April 28, 1859, in "Letters of James W. Grimes," 497-8. Compare Iowa election results, 1856 and 1858, in *New York Tribune Almanac*, Vol. II; Herriott, "Iowa and First Nomination of Lincoln," 202-207, 213-15, 452-61; Sparks, "Republican Party in Iowa . . .," 193-7.



cies both at home and in other states. Already as a concession to beer-drinking Germans and Irish, Republicans had modified their own "prohibitory liquor law," and in so doing had aroused mutterings from temperance minded churchmen. German leaders distrusted the Know-Nothing element in the Republican Party, and especially feared suffrage restrictions. When the Massachusetts legislature, firmly in the hands of Republicans, proposed to limit electoral privileges of aliens, Iowa Germans became belligerent and prepared for a showdown on this issue.<sup>31</sup>

The importance of the approaching elections, as seen by Republican managers, was succinctly expressed by Elijah Sells, secretary of state: "If we succeed in 1859 we shall be triumphant in 1860, and so the Democracy understand it, and hence they mean to make a desperate strike for power.  
... " <sup>32</sup>

Kasson was fortunate to be chairman at a time when party leaders were thoroughly alarmed and eager to cooperate in a hard-driving campaign. The party was fortunate also to have at the managerial helm a man of Kasson's ability, experience, and political insights. From the outset he seized the initiative and waged a campaign noted for its aggressiveness and efficient organization.

A prerequisite to success was the selection of a strong gubernatorial candidate, for it was known that the Democratic choice would be Augustus Caesar Dodge, distinguished ex-senator and diplomat, popular campaigner, "wise in the experience of long years in public service," and "honest and upright in his private life."<sup>33</sup>

Governor Lowe desired a second term, and during the first four months of 1859 received the loyal support of Kasson and his Des Moines following. But as sentiment crystallized, especially among eastern party leaders, Lowe was found wanting. In the words of W. W. Hamilton, ex-Englishman and a leading contestant for lieutenant governor from Dubuque, Lowe was "said to be a very good man; but a man may be too good and too soft," just as pure gold may require a little alloy to harden it for the world's com-

<sup>31</sup> Herriott, "Iowa and First Nomination of Lincoln," 206-213; William E. Dodd, "The Fight for the Northwest, 1860," *American Historical Review*, 16:781-4 (July, 1911).

<sup>32</sup> Sells to Dodge, Feb. 28, 1859, *Grenville M. Dodge Papers* (State Department of History and Archives, Des Moines).

<sup>33</sup> Clark, *Kirkwood*, 128.



merce." The same writer predicated these remarks upon some political gossip at Dubuque: "They think he is influenced and even governed by others; and some say that a Mr. Kasson is governor de facto."<sup>34</sup> Earlier, a Davenport politician had written: "I see Kasson the Chairman of the State Committee has become State Director so we go."<sup>35</sup>

If Lowe lacked the independence and toughness for a hard-slugging campaign, then who most nearly possessed these qualities? Senator Grimes in his quest for "common sense" leaders had long since spotted the man — the plain miller-farmer of Iowa City, Samuel J. Kirkwood, who for some time had been diligently lining up his own support. This man, simple in manner and careless in dress, an adroit canvasser and seasoned in politics from experience in both Ohio and Iowa, could be expected to "use up" the aristocratic Dodge on the stump before farmer audiences. A man of more than moderate means, he was a large landowner and a businessman becoming banker and railroad promoter. As a firm supporter of public education and eleemosynary institutions, he was "progressive." As a former Democrat, he perhaps could be made palatable to voters in southern Iowa. Fundamentally a moderate, he could be radical on the slavery issue as the occasion demanded. After the Nebraska Bill, he had firmly opposed slavery extension.<sup>36</sup>

Since 1857 Grimes had been grooming the willing Kirkwood for high office, and there are indications to support the rumor that the governorship was to be a steppingstone to Harlan's place in the United States Senate.<sup>37</sup> A Grimes-Kirkwood axis was forming to become the real core of the Iowa Republican machine. But it must not be assumed that Grimes's support was altogether personal, nor that Grimes alone backed him. Kirkwood, because

<sup>34</sup> Hamilton to Kirkwood, April 12, 1859, *Kirkwood Papers* (State Department of History and Archives, Des Moines). A Democratic editor described Lowe as a "mild, pleasant looking old gentleman" with "a whining and stammering delivery . . . not forcible in word or gesture." *Des Moines Iowa State Journal*, Oct. 3, 1857. George G. Wright remembered him as a "most credulous man." "Chief Justice Caleb Baldwin," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 1:211 (October, 1893). Charles Aldrich thought he combined "gentle graciousness of manner with high dignity" — putting everyone at ease in his presence — "a reliable and abiding friend." *Ibid.*, 4: 547 (October, 1900).

<sup>35</sup> John W. Thompson to C. C. Carpenter, Feb. 26, 1859, *Cyrus Clay Carpenter Papers* (State Historical Society, Iowa City).

<sup>36</sup> Clark, *Kirkwood*, 2-122.

<sup>37</sup> "Letters of James W. Grimes," 476-501, especially 478, 482, 484; Platt Smith to Charles Aldrich, May 21, 1859, *Kirkwood Papers*.

of his peculiar qualifications, was the candidate most likely to beat Dodge, and by May this fact was conceded by a majority of Republican leaders.

For the sake of party harmony and victory, Kasson himself was quick to subordinate his own preference. From his "personal intercourse and correspondence," and after a trip into western Iowa, he reported to Kirkwood that the voters, though finding no fault with Lowe, preferred a man with "more zeal, strength, and other elements of success." In central Iowa, Kirkwood support was "sincere and hearty." And the Democratic element, he advised — "which I understand you represent as well as my humble self" — would welcome Kirkwood's nomination. The Whigs, who had predominated thus far in state and national offices, should "neither be ignored nor too prominent." Referring to a previous meeting between himself and Kirkwood, Kasson suggested an easy way out for his friend, the Governor: Lowe would settle for the supreme court bench, hence the coming state convention could "reconcile conflicting purposes as I suggested to you at Iowa City in Feby."<sup>38</sup>

Two weeks later (about mid-May) Kasson again wrote Kirkwood. He had just received a letter from Lowe whose tone assured "good feeling." Kasson had replied to Lowe that Kirkwood, having been drawn out as a candidate by his friends, meant no disrespect to the Governor and his administration. And now, confided Kasson to Kirkwood, Lowe's name would *not* be withdrawn until near the convention date. "At that time . . . if his friends shall choose to do it, he can be named for a place on the Supreme Bench." Kasson stressed "the importance of preserving this preliminary canvass from bitterness."

More difficult was the task of harmonizing "conflicting purposes" between two contestants for lieutenant governor — W. W. Hamilton from the northeast and John Edwards from the south. When Kasson heard that Kirkwood and Edwards' friends were combining, he warned Kirkwood against any impression of "contract." Let the Republicans of Iowa City say a few kind words of Hamilton and his friends, "lest they take umbrage," the chairman advised. Such kind words "had already been said of Edwards."<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Kasson to Kirkwood, May 1, 1859, *Kirkwood Papers*, Sparks, "Republican Party in Iowa . . .," 209.

<sup>39</sup> Kasson to Kirkwood, May 17, 1859, *Kirkwood Papers*; also printed in *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 11:454-5 (July, 1914).

In the meantime, aroused German-American voters helped to resolve this contest in favor of Kasson's committee colleague — Nicholas J. Rusch, who was probably under the influence of his chairman.

On April 18 the central committee, under pressure from German leaders, had made public a resolution repudiating unequivocally the principles of the Massachusetts law restricting alien suffrage. Two days later Rusch wrote a long and clever letter to Kirkwood, painting a gloomy picture of revolting Germans and tactfully suggesting that he himself had the support of "all the Germans in the state," despite his modesty, broken English, and lack of political experience.

Two months later, when the nominating convention convened in Des Moines, it was no surprise that the dilemma of conflicting ambitions had been solved. Even before an informal ballot could be completed, a friend of Lowe arose and dramatically withdrew the Governor's name in order not to compromise "harmony of the party." Kirkwood's selection by acclamation was quickly followed by the nomination of Rusch for lieutenant governor and Lowe for supreme court justice.<sup>40</sup>

The choice of Caleb Baldwin of Council Bluffs as one of the other two nominees for the supreme court was a sign of the growing importance of southwestern Iowa, or the Missouri Slope, in state politics. And Baldwin, like Hoxie and Withrow, would be an important factor in the political future of John A. Kasson.

After presiding over an immense ratification meeting immediately following the convention, the state chairman, now having played a major role in making up the party slate, threw himself into the canvass with indefatigable energy, procuring and distributing campaign documents, advising candidates and planning itineraries, lining up speakers and taking the stump himself before the "sovereigns."<sup>41</sup> In the manner of the Lincoln-Douglas debates of the preceding year, the central committee arranged for joint discussions which put Kirkwood face to face with Dodge in almost every section of the state.

Kasson anxiously planned Kirkwood's itinerary in the southern counties,

<sup>40</sup> Rusch to Kirkwood, April 20, 1859, *Kirkwood Papers*; Herriott, "Iowa and First Nomination of Lincoln," 208. See also Elijah Sells, May [n. d], 1859, and W. W. Hamilton, May 17, 1859, to Kirkwood, *Kirkwood Papers*, Clark, *Kirkwood*, 124-6.

<sup>41</sup> Sells to Kirkwood, July 22, 1859, *Kirkwood Papers*.



showing a fine appreciation of campaign details and a full understanding of political cleavages in the state. He advised the candidate as to the best places to spend the night and the time of day when farmers would most likely attend rallies. Kirkwood should have good, reliable horses, a man along to attend them, save their strength, and keep the carriage in readiness. And further, "If your companion should happen to be good at giving instruction on political organization," he should do so while the debates went on. Strong, good men for the legislature should be lined up and supported.<sup>42</sup>

Throughout the campaign, Kasson expressed an anxiety over the southern tier of counties sharply in contrast with the feeling of Senator Grimes who was now taking a consistently rosy view of the election outcome. In these counties, Kasson warned, people from Kentucky, Tennessee, Maryland, and from southern Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio were "scared" at abolitionism. Therefore, Kirkwood should stress his Maryland birth, make the Democrats the real agitators of the slavery question, and portray Republicans as upholding the tradition of Jackson, Clay, and Webster. Slavery within the states should be let alone. In Know-Nothing districts, emphasis should be placed upon Rusch's fine education, his interest in agriculture, and a law to "purify the ballot box." Kirkwood, while speaking, should be constantly on guard against drunken, insulting interruptions. In each of these doubtful counties, Kasson promised to have a friend on hand to give advice.

As the canvass gathered steam, Kasson kept Kirkwood informed of its progress. Following a trip to Sioux City he reported cheering news, though northern Republicans were not sufficiently aroused. In general, Republican editors were jubilant, though few knew how "to keep the tone, the esprit of the party." Here and there dissension over personal ambition threatened the loss of a county. In Warren a disappointed Republican was "raising the devil. . . . Drunk, hungry, fickle, and inflated" with self-importance, he had been bought off. The chairman and a couple of other party trouble-shooters were going to Warren County to patch up this difficulty.<sup>43</sup>

From late July to early October, while Kirkwood and Dodge sniped at each other from stump after stump, the central committee and other party managers turned loose upon the state a galaxy of effective speakers which

<sup>42</sup> Kasson to Kirkwood, July 18, 20, 1859, *Kirkwood Papers*.

<sup>43</sup> Kasson to Kirkwood, July 23, Aug. 15, 23, 24, 1859, and Hoxie to Kirkwood, July 31, 1859, *Kirkwood Papers*.



today reads like a "Who's Who" of Iowa political leaders for the next half century. New political personalities, men like Grenville M. Dodge, Frank W. Palmer, and William Boyd Allison, won their spurs in this campaign. In a surprise visit to Council Bluffs, a visit then unheralded but of later great significance, Abraham Lincoln spoke for Kirkwood and against slavery. Sixty-two Republican newspapers, with additional ones sprouting up daily, poured vituperation upon the Democratic slate, especially Augustus C. Dodge. It was the most vigorous campaign to date in Iowa Republican history.<sup>44</sup>

Though cardinal principles of the Republican platform embraced opposition to slavery extension, support of liberal naturalization laws, and the demand for free homesteads, the campaign dealt equally as much, if not more, in personalities. Grimes's advice to Kirkwood provides a good clue to its tone: "Be sure to always get Dodge mad. Show him always to be a fool, as he is." And again, "Keep him on the defensive . . . 'stired [sic] up' all the time . . . and lead him on to abuse Harlan & myself."

Earlier Grimes had sketched a picture of Dodge which became a stereotype in this campaign and for many subsequent years. The Democratic nominee was a "great vain pompous blockhead," indefatigable in shaking hands, incapable of statesmanship — a wooden political god who, during nineteen years of officeholding in Iowa, had drawn \$105,000 from the public treasury, but who had never been known "to aid in building up any village or city in the state or to give to any charity, unless it be the catholic church of which his family are members. . . ." <sup>45</sup>

In turn, Democratic attacks upon Kirkwood were equally as vehement,

<sup>44</sup> Louis Pelzer, *Augustus Caesar Dodge* (Iowa City, 1908), 247; Clark, *Kirkwood*, 127. Though Kasson had invited Lincoln to speak during the campaign, the Rail-splitter's surprise appearance at Council Bluffs, on his return from Kansas, was motivated by personal affairs, not politics. R. T. Lincoln to F. I. Herriott, Feb. 1, 1908, *R. T. Lincoln Papers* (Library of Congress); Jacob A. Swisher, "Lincoln in Iowa," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 43:69-84 (January, 1945). For their budding newspapers, editors did not hesitate to solicit funds from the candidates and committee. Frank Palmer of the *Dubuque Times* sought a "loan of \$400" from Kirkwood, and W. H. Bigelow of Sioux City requested \$40 of Kasson and Rice and \$65 of Kirkwood and his friends for a "Republican Press." William Vandever, July 5, 1859, and W. H. Bigelow, Oct. 24, 1859, to Kirkwood, *Kirkwood Papers*. Kasson had invited Lincoln to speak at the Oskaloosa State Fair, Sept. 28, 1859, but Lincoln declined presumably because he was then preparing for an Ohio speaking tour. Kasson to Lincoln, Sept. 13, 1859 (Herriott's private collection, Des Moines).

<sup>45</sup> Grimes to Kirkwood, Aug. 2, 5, 1859 (pp. 557-8), and to C. C. Carpenter, July 15, 1859 (p. 503), in "Letters of James W. Grimes."

picturing him as filthy in dress and crude in manners, as an ignorant black-guard and a consummate demagogue. But Republican campaigners cleverly exploiting such attacks, produced their own stereotype of Kirkwood — the plain, unambitious farmer, careless in dress and toilet, who, fresh from the people, reluctantly left his wheat harvest to save the party, state, and nation.<sup>46</sup>

It was a jubilant state chairman who on October 12, 1859, sat down to write Kirkwood of Republican victory in Des Moines and Polk County. Final returns showed that the entire Republican ticket had squeezed by, that the Republican majority in the legislature had been increased. As both Kasson and Grimes had feared, Rusch, the German, had fallen behind Kirkwood. And in most of the southern counties Kirkwood had trailed Dodge, true to Kasson's fears which Grimes had discounted.<sup>47</sup>

One historian of this campaign has emphasized the connection between Republican victory and the German vote, attracted in part by Rusch's nomination.<sup>48</sup> But much credit must go to Kirkwood, the shrewd and tireless campaigner, and to Kasson, the shrewd and tireless manager. In the words of another historian, "Never before and seldom since was the Republican party so thoroughly organized. . . ." The campaign had barely got under way when a former state chairman, A. J. Stevens, reported: "The Central Comte are doing glorious work and their efforts will tell." C. C. Cole, prominent Democratic candidate for supreme court justice, attributed his defeat to Kasson's "influence" and "masterful manner" in handling the campaign. Even the political master, Grimes himself, wrote to Kirkwood in approving terms of the chairman's labors. And Kasson later took much pride in Grimes's commendation of his effective work in organizing the party.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Clark, *Kirkwood*, 123-43; Pelzer, *Dodge*, 235-48; Herriott, "Iowa and First Nomination of Lincoln," 213-17.

<sup>47</sup> Grimes to Kirkwood, June 25, July 14, 29, 1859, "Letters of James W. Grimes," 500-501, 502, 556-7; Kasson to Kirkwood, July 18, Oct. 12, 1859, *Kirkwood Papers*, *Tribune Almanac*, 2:62 (1858), and 60 (1859). Four of the counties specifically mentioned by Kasson — Appanoose, Davis, Decatur, and Wayne — and many other southern, western, and eastern counties, fell to Dodge.

<sup>48</sup> F. I. Herriott, "Germans in the Gubernatorial Campaign of Iowa in 1859," *Yearbook of the German-American Historical Society of Illinois* (1915), sections 23-29.

<sup>49</sup> Clark, *Kirkwood*, 127; Stevens and Grimes to Kirkwood, July 9, Aug. 30, 1859, *Kirkwood Papers*; Cole on Kasson, *Des Moines Register and Leader*, April 9, 1911.

But running among expressions of approval was a slight undertone of disapproval. Know-Nothing elements complained of the committee's catering to the German vote. John Edwards, passed over for lieutenant governor, took temporary umbrage at "Lowe's friends." John Teesdale, the newspaperman from Iowa City — English-born and schooled in politics in Ohio — having previously been sent to Des Moines by Grimes and Kirkwood to become state printer and editor of a Republican journal, zealously guarded Kirkwood's candidacy and kept a critical eye on the chairman. A full month after Kasson had gone over to Kirkwood, Teesdale reported that Lowe and his friends were still "active." "You [Kirkwood] were mistaken, I apprehend, as to the position of Kasson, who having given up all views of his own, is now regarded as a Lowe man." Later, as the committee laid plans for the joint canvass, Teesdale blurted out: "I do not know what our committee are about. Kasson is the committee and thinks he knows it all . . . he would do better to take advice occasionally, instead of giving it all the time."<sup>50</sup>

Teesdale was irked at Kasson because he "talked a Committee Campaign Paper," which if established would by-pass the editor's own Des Moines Citizen. "I have offered to furnish them a campaign *Citizen* to which they may contribute . . . at 25 cents per copy for the campaign," Teesdale explained.

More serious, in the light of future developments, was the criticism of J. C. Savery, New York-born businessman, politician, and builder-proprietor of a leading Des Moines hotel. Early in the campaign he informed Kirkwood: "I have no confidence in the management of the 'Chairman' in pecuniary matters connected with politics, not however as applying to his motives, but want of judgment. He is energetic and efficient in his peculiar way, but knows nothing of the things that impart vitality to the political heart."

Savery, not unamenable himself to an appointment, wanted Elijah Sells, then a strong Kirkwood man, to handle Republican money. He had already made arrangements for five hundred to a thousand dollars to go into the hands of Sells. He also urged that supreme court nominees should kick in. A few weeks later Sells wrote Kirkwood that "Kasson knows no way by which he can raise sufficient funds." Could not Kirkwood's milling com-

<sup>50</sup> Herriott, "Iowa and First Nomination of Lincoln," 208-210; Edwards (July 15) and Teesdale (June 7, July 9, 1859), to Kirkwood, *Kirkwood Papers*.



pany, through the candidate's partner and brother-in-law, send two hundred dollars? Grimes would contact "other companies."<sup>51</sup>

Almost fifty years later Kasson, mellowed and in a reminiscent mood, gave his version of campaign expenses: "Our resources were limited. There was little money for campaign purposes, less than four hundred dollars altogether. Senator Grimes sent me a check for one hundred dollars — a handsome contribution in those days — with the remark that this [Kasson's committee activities] was the first effective and systematic work done for the party in Iowa."<sup>52</sup>

Kasson's alleged inability in "pecuniary matters" was not Savery's only complaint. More than a month after the election he warned the governor-elect not to reappoint Lowe's private secretary, Thomas Withrow, who had made himself obnoxious to Kirkwood's friends. "I regard the gentleman [as] devoid of good sense, and a school Boy in political management, a fit tool for his ambitious & aspiring principal (Kasson) whose servant he is." "We do look with distrust," Savery continued, "upon a class of new politicians here . . . who gives early promise of a regency."<sup>53</sup>

Despite slight ripples of distrust, motivated by the chairman's independence and by the fear of a rival faction led by him, Mr. Kasson had become Mr. Importance in high Republican circles, and his name could be written right after those of Grimes, Harlan, and Kirkwood. His tenure as chairman was extended, and additional party leaders were put on the committee. He would help plan strategy for the all-important year, 1860, and he well knew, as did many of his colleagues, that the new party could not stand the shock of deep factional squabbles.

For Iowa was not yet *safely* Republican. Kirkwood's majority, despite herculean efforts, had been less than 3,000, or a margin of only 2.6 per cent of the total vote. Grimes's edge, five years previously, had been 4.1 per cent. To be successful in 1860, Republicans in Iowa, and in the nation, would have to find a means of welding together their disparate elements. Their program would have to have greater universal appeal. The anti-slavery radicalism of the Fremont campaign would have to be trimmed.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Savery, July 3, 1859, and Sells, July 22, 1859, to Kirkwood, *Kirkwood Papers*.

<sup>52</sup> Patchin, "Old Fashioned Man," *Sioux City Journal*, June 9, 1907.

<sup>53</sup> Savery to Kirkwood, Nov. 26, 1859, *Kirkwood Papers*.

<sup>54</sup> *Tribune Almanac*, 2:60 (1859); Herriott, "Iowa and First Nomination of Lincoln," 217.



Kasson had arrived at the right place at the right time. Political flux and the transfer of the capital to Des Moines paved the way for the newcomer in Iowa politics. In the Republican party and in the new state capital, political position had not yet become the vested interest of any man or faction. Talented and competent, Kasson took advantage of his opportunity. Fully identifying himself with the interests of Des Moines and the Republicans, he stood ready to grow in importance as they grew in importance. His successful management of the gubernatorial campaign of 1859 had won him a top place among Republican leaders, but his independence and sudden rise precipitated flakes of discontent which in the future could snowball into damaging opposition.

## WILLIAM B. ALLISON'S FIRST TERM IN CONGRESS, 1863-1865

*By Leland L. Sage\**

Readers familiar with the career of William Boyd Allison, because of the great length of his service in the United States Senate, may not realize that his senatorial career was preceded by four terms in the House of Representatives, the first one beginning in 1863 in the middle of the Civil War. These four terms served as his school of politics. Here he had the right combination of fortune and merit to draw assignments to such training schools in government and politics as the Committee on Public Lands and the Committee on Ways and Means. Here he could meet and know and work with such figures as Thaddeus Stevens, James G. Blaine, James A. Garfield, Rutherford B. Hayes, Samuel Hooper and Oakes Ames of Massachusetts, Justin Morrill of Maine, and Schuyler Colfax of Indiana in terms of the intimacy afforded by the small membership of those days.

With the Civil War going successfully, the dominant Republican membership of the House was very much like a close corporation of businessmen whose main duty was the procurement and disbursal of funds for the purpose of the promotion of the enterprise at hand. Under these circumstances it was possible to develop friendships (and enmities) that had an enduring quality. Moreover, there was the opportunity to know and work with such giants in the Senate as Iowa's own Grimes and Harlan, Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio, and Zachariah Chandler of Michigan, and to deal with no less a president than Abraham Lincoln and the luminaries of his cabinet, particularly, in Allison's case, Salmon P. Chase and Edwin M. Stanton of the Treasury and War Departments, respectively. Admittedly those were great days in which to serve one's apprenticeship in the art of government.

\*This article is based on material assembled for a full-length biography of William Boyd Allison, now in preparation. The author is indebted to the Newberry Library of Chicago for a Fellowship in Midwestern Studies which furnished assistance in the gathering of the material. For a summary of Allison's career before his arrival in Iowa in 1857, see the author's "The Early Life of William Boyd Allison," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY*, 48:299-334 (October, 1950).

The most natural question that arises is a query as to the fitness of William B. Allison of Dubuque for such a post and such an opportunity. The answer is favorable only in part. It may be readily granted that he brought to the task the average share of integrity, native wit, originality of ideas, and ability to sense and play up to situations that called for "promotional ability." His formal education had been limited, but his education in the world of experience had been varied and fortunate. He knew some law and had been admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States; he was co-counsel with Stephen V. White in the famous cause of *Gelpcke et al. v. The City of Dubuque*.<sup>1</sup> He had been a director of the Dubuque branch of the Iowa State Bank, that peculiar experiment in state participation in private banking which lasted from 1859 to 1865.<sup>2</sup> He had quickly joined up with the railroad promoters of the Illinois-Iowa area and was to some extent associated with the interests that sponsored the units that were finally merged as the Illinois Central Railroad through Iowa. His greatest talent seems to have been the ability to make himself "useful" to his constituents and his business colleagues, particularly to those who wanted to get charters and/or appropriations.

His weakness, if any, was a lack of experience in those governmental offices that might be thought of as preparatory to a career in Congress. He had never held any kind of public office whatsoever. He had been an unsuccessful candidate for Prosecuting Attorney in Ashland County, Ohio, before his move to Iowa; he had aspired to appointment as United States District Attorney for Iowa in March, 1861, but President Lincoln had given the prize to a rival who had secured many more recommendations, one W. H. F. Gurley of Davenport. He then intrigued a bit for a place on the bench of the Supreme Court of Iowa but made no headway at all.<sup>3</sup>

Allison's only worthwhile experience in public life grew out of politics, however. He had been a member of the state convention which had formally organized the Republican party in Ohio and had acted as one of the

<sup>1</sup> For Allison's admission to practice before the Supreme Court, see 67 *U. S. Reports* (2 Black), 9; for the case of *Gelpcke v. Dubuque*, see 68 *U. S. Reports* (1 Wallace), 175-223; Ethan P. Allen, "Gelpcke v. The City of Dubuque," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, 28:177-93 (April, 1930); Charles Fairman, *Mr. Justice Miller and the Supreme Court, 1862-1890* (Cambridge, Mass., 1939), 213-21.

<sup>2</sup> Howard H. Preston, *History of Banking in Iowa* (Iowa City, 1922), 83-125.

<sup>3</sup> Sage, "The Early Life of W. B. Allison," 322-4; Samuel J. Kirkwood *Correspondence* (Iowa State Department of History and Archives, Des Moines), Box 1, Nos. 352 and 356.

convention secretaries under the presidency of John Sherman;<sup>4</sup> he had been a member of state conventions of his party in Iowa and had been a delegate to the National Convention held in the Wigwam at Chicago when Abraham Lincoln was nominated for the presidency. (He had voted for Chase; perhaps this helps to account for Lincoln's appointment of Gurley for District Attorney.) In 1861 he had acted for a time as a special aide to Governor Kirkwood in the recruitment and outfitting of men for the regiments of volunteers raised in northeast Iowa. Even here he played second fiddle to Addison Sanders of Davenport. This was the sum total of his public and official duties before he sought the Republican nomination for Congress in 1862.

Allison's great friend and benefactor in these early years of his residence in Iowa had been another transfer from the Buckeye state, Governor Samuel Jordan Kirkwood. One who seeks an explanation of Allison's rapid recognition in party circles in his newly adopted state can give much of the credit to the political power of the doughty governor and his willingness to sponsor Allison for membership in conventions and as a civilian member of the governor's military staff. Allison's correspondence with his patron has about it a filial air. Further evidence might be found in a statement which Kirkwood made in his later years when, in retirement, he could view with pride the continuing successes of his protegee. As reported by a mutual friend, "The Grand Old 'War Governor' of our noble State of Iowa claims the honor (to me personally) of being the first one at the 'commencement of the War' and while or when Governor, to have brought Senator Allison into public notice — for which he says 'he has always been justly and personally proud of.'"<sup>5</sup>

For many years Allison reciprocated in every way possible. His power soon outran that of his patron, and he was able to help him in many ways. He campaigned for Kirkwood for re-election as governor in 1861; he refrained from running against him for the Senate in 1865; he assisted in his nomination and election as governor in 1875 (a place that the honest old

<sup>4</sup> John Sherman, *Recollections of Forty Years in the House, Senate, and Cabinet* (2 vols., Chicago, 1895), 1:105.

<sup>5</sup> Ira J. Alder to Allison, May 14, 1888, *William B. Allison Papers* (Iowa State Department of History and Archives, Des Moines), Box 41. Alder, a practicing attorney in Iowa City, was writing to Allison to suggest that an invitation be sent to the aging Kirkwood to attend the Republican National Convention at Chicago in June, 1888.



man did not want) and again as United States Senator in 1876; finally he carried the torch for him and for James F. Wilson of Fairfield as Iowa's eligibles for President Garfield's cabinet in 1881, an effort that resulted in the eventual selection of Kirkwood as Secretary of the Interior.<sup>6</sup>

The situation of the Union cause and Lincoln's position as its political and military director was, in 1862, a desperate one. Battles and campaigns had been lost; military organization was far from perfect; the search for a victory-producing general was as yet unfruitful;<sup>7</sup> there was much unrest among the people; and anti-War sentiments were freely expressed. All efforts in 1861 to form a kind of nonpartisan "Union" party had been defeated by staunch Republicans in Iowa as in many other states; only the extremities of the trying year of 1864 could ever make that idea acceptable to Allison or other party men.<sup>8</sup>

Under the circumstances, let it be granted that the great desideratum in 1862 was the election of representatives, senators, and governors who would loyally provide for the needs of the military branches. By this logic it was as patriotic to stand for office or to vote for the right candidates, *i. e.*, Republicans, as it was to shoulder a musket. It was not altogether mere spread-eagle oratory for a memorial service speaker to say of Allison that, after his recruiting activities and subsequent illness, he was "translated" to a higher field of service.<sup>9</sup> By current standards, service in Congress was in a higher category than merely enrolling recruits. As a member of Congress, Allison would be able to do things for the very men that he had signed up as soldiers.

Meanwhile, the failure of "Unionism" had driven the Democrats to a point of division. Some had rallied to the call for a war to preserve the Union from the very first; others gradually made their way over to this side, as they saw the determination of the South to fight to a finish. President Lincoln realized the value of winning over these "War Democrats," and he showered rewards on them, causing bitter wails from dis-

<sup>6</sup> Leland L. Sage, "William Boyd Allison: Last of the Radical Republicans" (unpublished manuscript).

<sup>7</sup> See Kenneth P. Williams, *Lincoln Finds a General* (2 vols., New York, 1950), and T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York, 1952), *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> O. B. Clark, *The Politics of Iowa During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Iowa City, 1911), 74-83, 111-14, 120, 174-5.

<sup>9</sup> See remarks by Charles W. Hackler, *Journal of the House . . . Extra Session . . . 32nd General Assembly* (Des Moines, 1908), 61-4.

appointed Republican office-seekers and commission-seekers. On the other hand, those Democrats who had in one way or another and to one degree or another opposed the war were called "Peace Democrats" and were popularly known as "Copperheads," "Cops," or "Secesh." If Peace Democrats were elected, argued the Republicans, the army would not be adequately sustained by appropriations, a certain amount of collaboration with the rebels would ensue, and peace might be made on Southern terms.

The recognized leader of the Peace Democrats in Iowa was Dennis A. Mahony of Dubuque, long a leading citizen of that city in journalistic, business, political, educational, and religious circles. His newspaper, the *Herald*, was known far and wide throughout the Northwest; indeed, its fame as an organ of dissent against the War had spread into the East. His great slogan was "The Constitution as it is and the Union as it was." He was an Irish-born American who had spent a portion of his youth in Philadelphia and had come to Iowa as a missionary-minded teacher; from this he graduated into journalism and politics. He and Allison were naturally bitter opponents.

One would think that all the high-mindedness, yea, the religious impulses, of the antislavery forces, in union with the nobility of the idea of a war to preserve the Union, would have combined to put the conduct of the government and the winning of the war on a high plane. Unfortunately this was not the case. Many men played "politics as usual," all the while covering their actions with the mantle of patriotism, then as always the last refuge of scoundrels — and of mediocre men as well.

As the people of Iowa entered the year 1862 and contemplated the congressional elections, not much time was lost in calling their attention to the needs for a strong Republican vote in order to give Lincoln and the war party adequate backing. For Iowa Republicans it was a matter of greatest thanks and rejoicing that the Census of 1860 had shown that the state was entitled to additional representatives. As finally worked out by Congress, four seats were added to the original two allotted to the state. Granted the increase in representation, was there a need to gerrymander? Not in a very exaggerated manner. The Democrats were concentrated in the populous river counties (Lee, Des Moines, Muscatine, Scott, Clinton, Dubuque). It was very simple to divide these up among two or three districts with enough inland counties to produce Republican voters to outnumber the Democrats concentrated in the cities of Dubuque, Clinton, Davenport, Muscatine,

Burlington, Fort Madison, and Keokuk.<sup>10</sup> Since a Republican triumph was made so inevitable, it follows logically that nomination would be equivalent to victory, barring a revolutionary upset.

Such was the prospect that invited Republican aspirants and confronted Democratic hopefuls as the contests opened. The modern reader must keep several things in mind when considering the plight of the Democrats in 1862. They were not yet fully aware of the factors lined up against them. The trend toward Republicanism was still a recent thing, less than ten years old, and the Democrats had not yet accustomed themselves to their new status of a helpless minority party. The memories of constant and regular Democratic victories were still green, and the names of Augustus Caesar Dodge and George Wallace Jones as Senators were still household words. Another precaution the reader must take is to remember that the contest of 1862 was to be the very first in which the new arrangement of six districts would be tried out. No one could be sure of the results. The mathematically-minded might count up the potential votes in the various counties and total them up in the respective districts. No doubt this was done in an amateurish fashion, for political forecasting had not become the near-science it is in our day.

Another political factor productive of uncertainty was the effect of the war. Would fathers vote to keep the war going at any price, even the price of the lives of their sons, or would they vote for peace at any price and regain their sons? And this question raised another one, mostly for the politicians. Should those sons in military service be allowed to vote? If so, for whom would they vote? Did they believe in the cause they were fighting for sufficiently to vote for the party that would keep them in the field, or would they follow the instincts for safety and comfort and vote for those who would work for immediate peace? These were the basic questions, although of course there was much talk about the "sacredness of the franchise," "soldiers are also citizens," "vote the same way you shoot," and other pious sentiments.

The data on the contest for the Republican nomination which launched Allison's legislative career of forty-three years is admittedly scarce but fortunately very significant. The nomination would be made at a district con-

<sup>10</sup> Paul S. Pierce, "Congressional Districting in Iowa," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 1:339-43 (July, 1903). Pierce concludes that the districts were made safe for the Republicans.



vention at West Union on August 6, but of course this would be preceded by political maneuvers designed to pledge the members in advance. It is impossible to say with finality just when Allison began to entertain the idea of running for Congress. We have seen him trying for an appointment as United States District Attorney and almost simultaneously fishing in the muddy waters of a contest for an Iowa Supreme Court judicial vacancy. One story has it that when Allison was passed over for Gurley as District Attorney, Mrs. Harlan, wife of the senior Senator from Iowa, comforted the disappointed candidate with the advice to go home and run for Congress, advice which he would follow faithfully and to the great chagrin of Mrs. Harlan's husband a few years later.<sup>11</sup>

The first solid evidence of Allison's interest is found in a letter to Governor Kirkwood that fairly groans with anxiety and fear and pleading:

Confidential.

Dubuque, Iowa. June 10, 1862.

Dear Govr —

I write you today to ask of you a special favor which if granted will be or may be of much service, viz — That you will hold in *abeyance* until after our Congressional nomination the appointment of Shubail [Shubael] P. Adams as Swamp Land Agent. If you give him that appointment now it will wield a power in my district that may defeat me for nomination. I think my chances are now good, but if he has this appointment he can use it in some of the northern counties to great advantage, as that is to them an important consideration. As you have already indicated that you would probably appoint him I cannot ask you to appoint another. But you will if you have any interest in my success greatly serve me by allowing the matter to rest until after the nomination. I beg of you to do this favor for me now. With my best wishes for your success health & prosperity, I am

Your friend & obdt servt

Wm. B. Allison

P. S. The interests of the State cannot suffer by postponement. Please answer me with reference to this.<sup>12</sup>

This agonized plea for help against his fellow townsman was based on a well-founded fear. The gentleman in question was a very able man in every

<sup>11</sup> Earl B. Delzell, "William Boyd Allison, an Iowa Statesman and Mason," *Grand Lodge Bulletin* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa), 32: No. 8 (October, 1931).

<sup>12</sup> Allison to Kirkwood, June 10, 1862, *Kirkwood Correspondence*, Box 1, No. 515.



respect. During the campaign of 1861, when both Adams and Allison were speaking for Kirkwood, a seasoned and expert judge such as Jacob Rich, soon to become the dean of Iowa politicians and political journalists, readily praised Adams far more than Allison for the excellence of his oratory and the value of his arguments.<sup>13</sup> Kirkwood was under special obligation to Adams for his assistance in the campaign, probably as much as to Allison, and the latter had received his reward (the post as special aide to the governor). Now it might be Adams' turn to receive the governor's favor.

Another strong rival for the congressional nomination was Lieutenant Governor Oran Faville of Mitchell County. He was openly favored by the *New Hampton Courier*, the *New Oregon Star*, and by the learned A. B. F. Hildreth, editor of the *Charles City Intelligencer*, one of the outstanding editors in the state. The great point with all these editors was their jealousy of Dubuque, which was charged with wanting a "perpetual lease" on the congressional position. Both William Vandever and Timothy Davis, preceding Representatives, were from Dubuque. In the opinion of the editors, Adams and Allison had no merits for the position other than being from Dubuque, which was a "secession-polluted city."<sup>14</sup> Faville's ability was attested by his selection as chairman of the committee on permanent organization and membership on the committee on resolutions of the state convention held at Des Moines on the 30th of July, just a few days before the district convention at West Union.

The great day finally came. The little town was alive with excitement and its hotel taxed to capacity by the visiting delegates. Judging by their later editorials, both Hildreth and Rich seemed to be as much impressed by the surprisingly high "quality" of the delegates and by the absence of drinking and brawling as they were by the virtues of the candidates and the principles of the party. There were 133 delegates present. One informal and three formal ballots were necessary to reach a decision. On the informal ballot, the traditional test of strength in nominating conventions, five candidates received votes: Allison and Adams were tied with 31 each; F. A. Brush received 29; Oran Faville, 22; and S. Murdock, 16. Adams

<sup>13</sup> On Shubael P. Adams, see Franklin T. Oldt (ed.), *History of Dubuque County, Iowa* . . . (Chicago, n. d.), 773-4; on Jacob Rich, see George E. Roberts, "The Career of Jacob Rich," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 13:165-74 (April, 1915).

<sup>14</sup> *Charles City Intelligencer*, June 26, July 3, 7, 31, 1862.

then withdrew, and the first formal ballot gave Allison 49½ and Faville 48, while the balance was divided between Brush, Murdock, and a newcomer, Reuben Noble. On the second formal ballot Allison climbed to 60, Faville received 53, and Brush, the remaining runnerup, 19. Brush then withdrew, and the nomination went to Allison on the third ballot, when he received 75 and Faville 58.<sup>15</sup> This was a majority for Allison of the 133 votes cast, and on the motion of an opponent, Judge E. H. Williams of Elkader, the vote was made unanimous.<sup>16</sup>

Jacob Rich, that master correspondent who saw the convention from his post as secretary, commented:

The Cong. Convention held at West Union on Wednesday last, was one of the best Conventions we have ever attended. It was one of the finest looking and most intelligent bodies of men that we have ever seen collected for a similar purpose and to its credit be it said that not a man during its setting [*sic*], could be found under the influence of liquor. . . . Col. Allison will poll a very strong vote in Dubuque County, and unless the volunteering draws almost exclusively upon the Republican vote, will be selected by a big majority.

Rich also pointed out that Allison had had the support of "21 of the very best men of Dubuque . . . not merely politicians, but men standing high in mercantile and professional life — men of character, men of regard among their fellow citizens."<sup>17</sup>

The account as given in Allison's rival's paper, the *Dubuque Herald*, gives the point of view of the Peace Democrats:

Abolitionists and Republicans of this the Third Congressional District, after considerable travail, nominated Wm. B. Allison, Esq., as their candidate for Congress. Mr. Allison, it is fair to presume, was thought by his political friends to be their strongest candidate, although a large minority of them thought otherwise, and so do we. From our point of view, Mr. Allison is the very man for us to beat the easiest. . . .

As a neighbor and fellow-citizen we respect Mr. Allison, but as a politician, we look upon him as one of those who have brought our country to its perilous condition. . . .<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Independence *Buchanan County Guardian*, Aug. 12, 1862.

<sup>16</sup> *Idem.*, also see Charles City *Intelligencer*, Aug. 14, 1862; Davenport *Gazette*, Aug. 9, 1862.

<sup>17</sup> Independence *Buchanan County Guardian*, Aug. 12, 1862.

<sup>18</sup> *Dubuque Herald*, Aug. 8, 1862.

The great source of worry for Allison now was the identity of his opponent. The logical opponent was the recognized leader of the Peace Democrats in the third district and the state, his own fellow-Dubuquer, Dennis A. Mahony. If not chosen as the nominee, certainly Mahony would have the largest single voice in determining the selection. Therefore, there seems to be something more than casual coincidence in the fact that on August 14, just eight days after Allison's nomination and six days before the Democrats were scheduled to hold their district convention, Allison's friend, United States Marshal Herbert M. ("Hub") Hoxie, appeared in Dubuque and with his deputies awakened Mr. Mahony from his slumbers, arrested him, packed him on an early-morning steamboat for Davenport from whence he was taken by train to Washington, and thus effectively removed him from personal participation in the campaign.<sup>19</sup>

Allison did not, of course, so far as we know, request the arrest of the Democratic leader, but it is impossible to refrain from thinking that he was privy to the affair and that it was very poor sportsmanship on the part of all concerned. This is not to argue that Mahony was guiltless. One wonders how he had escaped "rough treatment" long before this. Riding on a rail, tarring and feathering, and enforced carrying of an American flag down Main Street are humiliations that have been meted out to many in our history who have been less offensive in their opposition to the popular feeling. One especially wonders why the patriots of Dubuque had not dumped his printing presses into the Mississippi River long before this arbitrary arrest. Therein lies the heart of the matter. No one could object if Mahony had been called to task at any earlier time from July, 1861, onwards. But to wait until the eve of a man's probable elevation to political honor to arrest him without warrant and then without trial take him a thousand miles from home and incarcerate him in a filthy prison is hardly in keeping with the best American tradition.

Mahony claimed later that the arrest was made without warrant, inas-

<sup>19</sup> D. A. Mahony, *The Prisoner of State* (New York, 1863), *passim*; Wood Gray, *The Hidden Civil War* (Chicago, 1935), 88; John A. Marshall, *American Bastille...* (Philadelphia, 1874), 403-416; Davenport *Gazette*, Aug. 15, 1862; Independence *Buchanan County Guardian*, Aug. 19, 1862. Robert S. Harper, *Lincoln and the Press* (New York, 1951), 150, errs in accepting the statement of Franc B. Wilkie, *Pen and Powder* (Boston, 1888), 9-10, that Mahony had been nominated prior to his incarceration. In fact, Harper contradicts a statement made two paragraphs previously where he says that Wilkie carried the news of Mahony's nomination to him in the prison at Washington.



much as Marshal Hoxie refused to show him an alleged order from Secretary of War Stanton, and that he was never given the trial to which he was entitled.<sup>20</sup> The Republican newspapers which briefly reported the incident merely said that the charge was interference with enlistments.<sup>21</sup> It is certainly true that Mahony's editorials had had the effect of interfering with enlistments almost from the first days of the war. Recent writers have accepted this as the "charge."<sup>22</sup> As a matter of fact, "He was never brought to trial, which he repeatedly demanded, and it is not known what the charges were upon which he was arrested," writes a Republican editor and historian, a contemporary of the event.<sup>23</sup> Mahony himself wrote two letters to Governor Kirkwood while the party was resting in Davenport, letters written more as a friend than as an official, contending that he had never intended to embarrass the government but rather to admonish it of its error.<sup>24</sup>

Editor Jacob Rich may be depended on to give the fairest statement of any of Mahony's opponents. He said he believed the arrest to be in accordance with the wishes of the soldiers, the people, and the loyal press, and that the government was justified in seeing that Mahony's work was stopped. Still, he felt not "exaltation but regret" at the necessity of the action. Mahony he conceded to be a man of talent and potentially of great service to the government, possessing much influence over the Irish Catholics in the state, but unfortunately instead of serving his government he had merely helped to sow disloyalty.<sup>25</sup>

Allison and other opponents of Mahony were not interested in splitting hairs over Mahony's constitutional arguments. They had the power to get

<sup>20</sup> Mahony, *Prisoner of State*, 392-4.

<sup>21</sup> Davenport *Gazette*, Aug. 15, 20, 1862; Iowa City *Republican*, Aug. 27, 1862.

<sup>22</sup> Gray, *Hidden Civil War*, 97; Henry Clyde Hubbard, *The Older Middle West, 1840-1880* . . . (New York, 1936), 184.

<sup>23</sup> Benjamin F. Gue, *History of Iowa* (4 vols., New York, 1903), 2:86.

<sup>24</sup> Mahony to Kirkwood, Aug. 15, 1862, *Kirkwood Correspondence*, Box 7, Nos. 547, 548. Earlier, on Jan. 13, Mahony had written to Kirkwood that he was sending him the *Herald*, saying that he feared Kirkwood had permitted his mind to become prejudiced against him but he hoped to continue on good terms, politics apart.

<sup>25</sup> Independence *Buchanan County Guardian*, Aug. 19, 1862. The Iowa City *Republican*, Aug. 27, 1862, was much more outspoken. "Dennis A. Mahony, Dubuque's unenvied treason monger, has been arrested by the U. S. Marshall [sic] for Iowa, on a charge of discouraging enlistments. His arrest was demanded by the highest considerations known to the country. Any man in a loyal portion of the country,



him put away for the time being, and they used it. The same thing was done to David Sheward of Fairfield, editor of the *Constitution and Union*; Dr. Edson B. Olds in Ohio; and many others.<sup>26</sup> Hoxie was again the "law" in the Sheward case; someone furnished a special train for the trip from Burlington to Fairfield, a matter of some twenty-two miles. Sheward was taken to Washington as a companion prisoner with Mahony. After his departure, Sheward's work was carried on with impunity by the banker, Charles Negus, while Mahony's successor was Stilson Hutchins, a man whose pen was dipped in a more venomous brand of poison than had ever been Mahony's.<sup>27</sup>

As to Mahony, the sequel reads like a storybook rather than sober history. As a "prisoner of state," as he called himself, languishing on the third floor of Old Capitol Prison in Washington, the unfortunate editor was somehow able to send and receive messages to the faithful at home in the third district.<sup>28</sup> On the 20th the Democrats met at West Union and defied the captors of their hero by nominating him to be Allison's opponent, not however without a struggle from a milder wing of the party. Mahony won over Senator G. W. Gray of Allamakee County, 52 2/3 to 51 1/3.<sup>29</sup>

To Stilson Hutchins, the nomination of his colleague was more important as a "vindication of a principle than as a personal triumph,"<sup>30</sup> but to the Republican papers it was an act both infamous and suicidal. "The Democrats . . . have placed the capsheaf to their infamy and consigned their party in Iowa to perdition." "These fellows seem to be determined to show

who will so write and speak and act as to give aid and comfort to the sworn and banded enemies of the Union, and thus increase the hazards of life and limb of the Union men who have volunteered themselves to their country, deserves not only to be arrested but deserves the fate of a traitor. . . . His pestilent [*sic*] course has been arrested, and other miserable copyists and lick spittels of Mahony will do well to take warning from his example."

<sup>26</sup> Fairfield *Weekly Ledger*, Aug. 21, 1862. Gray, *Hidden Civil War*, 88, refers to Sheward as "Dana." All other sources use "David." See also Hubbard, *Older Middle West*, 185; James G. Randall, *Lincoln the President* (2 vols., New York, 1946), 2:232. Mahony, *Prisoner of State*, *passim*, gives many details about others who were arrested and imprisoned.

<sup>27</sup> Fairfield *Weekly Ledger*, April 21, 1862, and succeeding issues for references to Negus. See Oldt (ed.), *History of Dubuque County*, 144, for Hutchins.

<sup>28</sup> See Margaret Leech, *Reveille in Washington* (New York, 1941), Ch. 8; Marshall, *American Bastille* . . ., 403-416.

<sup>29</sup> Dubuque *Herald*, Aug. 23, 1862.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, Aug. 22, 1862.

the people of Iowa how low in infamy they can sink. . . . They are lost to all sense of shame or decency.”<sup>31</sup>

The Cedar Falls *Gazette*, edited by the very able Henry A. Perkins, was even more vehement.

The Democratic party of this State cut its own throat when it nominated D. A. Mahony . . . for Congress. . . . Nothing that its opponents could say, will as fully and conclusively prove to the masses that treason lurks in Iowa Democracy, as the nominating of a man who for a long time has openly and boldly acted the part of a traitor, and who, at the time he was nominated, was under arrest on the charge of treason. The people of Iowa, as a mass, do not want anything to do with a man even suspected of having treasonable proclivities, much less with one who unblushingly vaunts his treason and glories in it, and who has been denounced as a traitor by a large portion of his own party. His nomination was a death blow to Democracy in this State. Nearly one-half of the delegates in the convention repudiated the nomination and left in disgust, saying that they should use all their influence for Mahony's defeat. Think of it, a traitor under arrest for his openly displayed hostility to the Government, nominated for one of the highest and most important offices in the gift of the people. Such loyalty is a cheat and a lie, and every honest man will repudiate it.<sup>32</sup>

So now the people of Iowa and the nation were treated to the strange spectacle of two gentlemen from Dubuque running for the same seat in Congress, each one claiming a monopoly on the title of patriot; one, Mahony, prematurely patriarchal in appearance, manner, and tone; the other, Allison, young and energetic, with bristling hair and beard, cautiously hopeful that at last he was on the way to political success.

As the nominee of the war party, Allison took full advantage of his party's monopoly on patriotism and smeared his opponent without mercy. In this he was aided by the best speaking talent that the party could produce. Probably the most pretentious meeting held during the campaign was one at Independence, then the largest town in the district west of Dubuque. As advertised by Editor Jacob Rich in the *Buchanan County Guardian* of September 23, 1862, the friends of the Union were urged to attend.

<sup>31</sup> *Iowa City Republican*, Aug. 27, 1862; *Fairfield Weekly Ledger*, Sept. 4, 1862.

<sup>32</sup> *Cedar Falls Gazette*, Aug. 29, 1862.

Let every hater of treason and rebellion come to Independence on Wednesday, September 24, at 2 o'clock P.M. and hear Iowa's distinguished Senator, JAMES W. GRIMES, discuss the great issues of the hour. Col. W. B. Allison and S. [Shubael] P. Adams, Esq., of Dubuque will also be present and address the meeting.

This will be a great occasion. Let every man and woman be present and listen to loyalty and truth as expounded by eloquent tongues.

The same paper on the 30th gave a very full report, an almost unique event in the journalistic practices of the day. The affair had proved to be a gala occasion with hundreds in attendance. The afternoon was opened by a speech of three quarters of an hour by Col. Allison who said there used to be great party questions: slavery, the tariff, public lands, for example. Now there was only one — the preservation of the Union and the Constitution. Unfortunately his opponent could not discuss this question in person, but his views could be found day after day in the columns of the *Dubuque Herald*. Allison read a number of excerpts showing that Mahony had "labored for recognition of the Southern Confederacy, declared for the right of rebellion, argued that the interests of the West were with the South, denounced the measures of the government for its own protection, defended rebellion, and justified the South." He showed that Mahony as a Vallandigham follower could be counted on not to vote support for the government. As for himself, he would use any measures for crushing the rebellion: the provisions, the horses and cattle, the slaves of the rebels should be seized, Negroes should not be exempt from service. "Mr. Allison spoke effectively, and was listened to attentively, and greeted repeatedly with applause." The speeches of the other orators were reviewed, the one by S. P. Adams receiving more space than the others, even more than the speech by Senator Grimes. Adams also quoted Mahony but used different quotations from those cited by Allison, showing Mahony's shifting views on the Constitution.

Mahony's substitute in the editorial chair of his newspaper did not fail to strike out for him and against Allison at every opportunity. Mahony had merely correctly prophesied the horrors and expense of war to suppress the rebellion and he wanted the President to use constitutional means, wrote Hutchins. He declared that after force was determined upon, Mahony had offered to raise a full regiment of Irishmen, but the offer was refused by the governor *through the interference of William B. Allison* on the ground that the political effect would damage the *Republican* cause.



The same issue carried the following editorial which demonstrates the feeling of the times:

We understand that W. B. Allison with well affected horror, is in the habit of asking Democrats if they intend to vote for D. A. Mahony, "the traitor." We can tell Mr. Allison one thing which though it may be wounding to his self-pride, is nevertheless about as true as anything he is in the habit of uttering, that when he is known only on war claim reports, and possibly upon the lists of Congressional Delegations, Mr. Mahony's name, rising higher in the esteem of the people as the years go by, shall be known as that of a man who dared to go to a political bastille [sic] in penalty of holding opinions which could neither be bought by gold nor silenced by threats. He may be a traitor, as Mr. Allison generously and felicitously declares, but it is a treachery to those sentiments, and to that creed which ten years hence it will be the shame of any decent man to have ever holden. As for us, we would sooner be Mr. Mahony, in prison, with his consciousness of duty well performed, than Mr. Allison in Congress, the representative of a party which has effected the ruin of the country.<sup>33</sup>

The same paper returned to the charge on October 1, asserting that Allison used his expense money while serving as governor's aide partly in traveling around the district and getting acquainted politically. He had not been in the state long and would not be so far advanced in politics if he had not used this military method for building up friendships in the right places.

On leaving his native State of Ohio, it is said he abandoned the dark lantern party, whose proscriptive principles aimed at disfranchising a large portion of good American citizens; and on becoming a resident of this State, he affiliated with the Abolitionists, whose standard-bearer he now is in this Congressional District. He is a fortunate man, so far as being a political adventurer is concerned; for there are many older men in the District, longer residents of the State, men of ability and large experience, who have entertained conservative principles and uniform political tenets, any one of whom in ordinary times would have been nominated over him. But will the conservative people of the District allow him to be elected? <sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Dubuque *Herald*, Sept. 24, 1862.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 1, 1862. Italics added. The "dark lantern party" is a veiled reference to the American, or Know-Nothing, party. As to Allison's probable membership, see Sage, "The Early Life of W. B. Allison," 323-4.



While the situation in Iowa was not as critical for the Republicans as in some other states, notably Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, it was well that some provision was made for a vote by the soldiers in the field. It would probably be impossible to prove the absolute original source of the idea of soldier voting; Allison definitely claimed a part in urging it upon Governor Kirkwood, first having secured the endorsement of Senator Grimes. A year later a man in a very good position to know about such things gave the credit for authorship to Judge John F. Dillon of Davenport, but he may have been referring only to the legal drafting of the bill.<sup>35</sup> The enabling law was passed in a special session of the legislature in September called by Governor Kirkwood.<sup>36</sup>

The method of voting was complex, but the principal agent in the matter was a voting commissioner who went to the camps to distribute the ballots to the men in service and supervise the voting. The party leaders were almost frantic in their desire to secure a favorable return from this source. More than one letter from officers to the political leaders back at home testifies to the pressure brought to bear to get them to use their influence on their men.

Iowa won for herself a place in the vanguard of the Republican party by her staunch support of the Lincoln-Republican ticket in 1862, a place which assured recognition for years to come in the distribution of cabinet honors and other places at the disposal of the party leaders. While other states were giving distress to the leaders, Iowa was rolling up majorities for all six of the congressional candidates of that year. Allison's vote in the district was 9,684 to Mahony's 8,327. In addition, 2,248 came to Allison from the soldiers in the field, with only 125 votes from the boys in blue for Mahony. No other Iowa Democratic candidate received so few soldier votes, although Mahony had predicted a few days before the election that he would receive a heavy soldier vote because the "Abolitionists brought on the war and left the Democrats to fight it out."<sup>37</sup>

A few days after the election, Mahony was given his release from Old

<sup>35</sup> Thomas F. Withrow to General G. M. Dodge, Aug. 12, 1863, *Grenville M. Dodge Papers* (Iowa State Department of History and Archives, Des Moines), Box 5.

<sup>36</sup> Josiah Benton, *Voting in the Field* (Boston, 1915), 47-52.

<sup>37</sup> Davenport *Gazette*, Oct. 29, 1862; Benton *Voting in the Field*, 51-2; *Fairfield Weekly Ledger*, Oct. 23, 1862; *Independence Buchanan County Guardian*, Dec. 2, 1862.

Capitol on the ground that his health was being impaired since he was suffering from an incipient paralysis, a rather phenomenal diagnosis in the light of his subsequent career of seventeen active years. Most of his votes had come from Dubuque County voters who expressed themselves then as on many later occasions as believers in his views and his character. His main contribution to this story is now over, but in state and local politics he was to be a force down to the year of his death in 1879.<sup>38</sup>

At long last Allison could breathe the breath of victory. Now he had thirteen months for preparation for his duties in Washington. How did a Congressman-elect spend his time in the days when there was such a long interval between election and induction into office? Allison is on record for only one action of any note. In March, 1863, he joined with others to put some fear in the hearts of the local opponents of the war. Mahony had not moderated the tone of his writing. The pages of the *Herald* show the nature of the Mahony editorials and demonstrate the reason for that paper's popularity amongst the anti-War people of the Northwest. For example, on January 6, Lincoln was described as "a brainless tyrant, a perverted public servant, a blundering partisan, a buffoon President." The answer of men like Allison was to organize a chapter of the Loyal League. A spy of the *Herald* reported that one night he saw Bissell, Conger, Allison, Blocklinger, Shiras, Adams, and others steal out one by one from a secret meeting in the old Turner Hall. The *Herald* editor declared "these midnight gatherings of a lawless confraternity have no worthy object for a stimulus. . . ." <sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile the Iowa political pot was boiling with "politics as usual." Merit was the last thing looked for; the object was to win the elections. It might be remarked at this point that Iowa during these years followed the practice of electing the governor and certain lesser officers in the odd-numbered years. United States Senators were elected by the state legisla-

<sup>38</sup> Wood Gray, *Hidden Civil War*, 182-3, dismisses Mahony and Henry Clay Dean, Iowa's other great Copperhead leader, all too lightly. Mahony received the most complete endorsement of his fellow-citizens, who elected him to the office of sheriff in 1863 and 1865. In later years he was a trusted citizen and fearless leader of the people and, incidentally, a frequent correspondent of Allison's. He appeared as a stalwart Greenbacker in a Detroit convention and he announced his support of Hayes in 1876.

<sup>39</sup> Oldt (ed.), *History of Dubuque County*, 290, 292-3. The prominent Republican leaders referred to were: F. E. Bissell, P. H. Conger, William B. Allison, O. P. Shiras, Shubael P. Adams, and B. F. Blocklinger. All except Blocklinger were men of some prominence in future Iowa politics.

ture in January of the even-numbered years. Consequently, what with annual county, district, and state nominating conventions and elections, Iowa politicians and voters were hardly ever free from the shadow of some impending political event. As a seasoned campaigner of later years described it, "We work through one campaign, take a bath and start in on the next."<sup>40</sup> Politics was a full-time occupation, and one wonders at the hardihood of the campaigners of that day, usually making their canvasses by horseback or buggy except for an occasional train trip.

Part of Allison's time during the thirteen months of waiting between election and induction into office was spent in politics. During the interval a gubernatorial campaign would be run off, a new Iowa House of Representatives and approximately one-half of the state Senate would be elected. Both of these campaigns would have an indirect bearing on the election of a United States Senator in January, 1864, at which time presumably Senator Grimes would be a candidate to succeed himself. Although Allison was now safely elected to office in his own right, he would have to take an interest in the contests of others. At this stage of his career his whole future was wrapped up in the way he played his political cards with the three giants of contemporary Iowa politics, Grimes, Harlan, and Kirkwood, and with the two who ranked next in power, namely, James F. Wilson and John A. Kasson. (Grenville M. Dodge had not yet emerged as a political force.) There is, however, no record of Allison's participation in the active electioneering for governor. He was not an effective man on the hustings and he had not yet acquired the prestige that guaranteed him a hearing for his rational approach to the problems of the day.

Each party was under virtual compulsion to nominate a military man for the office. The Republicans, relying on their reputation as "the party of patriotism," named Colonel William Milo Stone of Knoxville.<sup>41</sup> The Democrats lived up to expectations and put a Democratic general at the head of their ticket, General James M. Tuttle of Des Moines, a man of as yet unassailable reputation and with an excellent war record.

Although the Republicans were on tenterhooks all through the canvass, their fears were not realized. Stone and the ticket came through nicely, and

<sup>40</sup> George M. Titus, "The Battle for Biennial Elections," *Annals of Iowa* (third series), 29:163-75 (January, 1948), tells from personal experience the story of the conditions and attitudes that prevailed during the days of the annual elections.

<sup>41</sup> Herbert M. Hoxie to Dodge, July 1, 1863; M. M. Crocker to Dodge, July 2, 1863, *Dodge Papers*, Box 5.



the politicians could now relax for a few weeks until the General Assembly would meet in January and begin the session by electing a United States Senator.

Turning now to the Washington scene, it is evident at once that Allison entered Congress at a momentous time. The Thirty-eighth Congress began its first session on December 7, 1863. Allison took his new position and location in stride and in no way let it throw him off his habitual course of interests and action. A widower without home cares or children to absorb his time and to give him solace, he could devote his entire time to the cause of friends, party, and country. Ambitious, plainly desirous of the company of influential people, and enjoying the feeling of belonging to the groups that got things done, he aggressively sought out new opportunities. He was thirty-four years of age and it was high time for him to be about the business of making his mark in life if ever.

Of the six members in the House of Representatives from Iowa, the only hold-over member, James Falconer Wilson of Fairfield, was easily the outstanding man.<sup>42</sup> He was given the chairmanship of the Committee on the Judiciary by Speaker Schuyler Colfax. Fully as intellectually brilliant and perhaps more prominent at the time was John Adam Kasson of Des Moines. Already well placed in public life because of his two years as First Assistant Postmaster General, Kasson had just returned from a successful mission to Paris where he helped to create the First International Postal Union. He was a friend of Attorney General Edward Bates and of the influential Blair family, and his influence with President Lincoln was attested by that master politician, Herbert M. Hoxie. For example, Hoxie wrote G. M. Dodge in regard to the latter's promotion: "Kasson has been indefatigable, worked every day, and he is a tower of strength. He is about *the only Lincoln man in our delegation* and could do therefore more than all else. . . ." A few months later Hoxie wrote Dodge again on the same subject: "Grimes,

<sup>42</sup> James G. Blaine, writing in 1884, listed Allison among many others who were "destined to long service and to varying degrees of prominence." *Twenty Years of Congress: From Lincoln to Garfield* (2 vols., Norwich, Conn., 1884-1886), 1:500. He enumerated Allison's colleagues in the House and then vouchsafed that Allison, Kasson, and Hiram Price all "earned honorable distinction in after years." *Ibid.*, 1:501. The omission of James F. Wilson seems strange. Blaine at the time did not attract much confidence from Speaker Schuyler Colfax, who appointed him to the inconspicuous Committee on Post Roads and the lesser Committee on the Militia. See *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 Sess., 18. George S. Boutwell, *Reminiscences of Sixty Years* (2 vols., New York, 1902), 2:1, discusses the opening of the 38th Congress in which he was a freshman colleague of Allison, Blaine, and Garfield.



Kasson and Allison all promised to look after the matter and I believe Grimes is in earnest. Kasson will do everything in his power for you. Allison also — but he dont [sic] amount to much in that way.”<sup>43</sup>

Allison's other three colleagues were Hiram Price, a man of considerable wealth and distinction in his home city of Davenport; Josiah Bushnell (“J.B.” to all concerned) Grinnell of Grinnell, minister, educator, real estate and railroad promoter, whose biography is rather disillusioning as to his common sense and ability to get things done; and Judge Asahel W. Hubbard, soon to return to the practice of law and the promotion of railroads at Sioux City.<sup>44</sup> In such company as this Allison was neither the best nor the worst, neither first nor last, and the phenomenal thing is that he soon was outrunning the whole group in the game of politics.

Iowa's Senators at the time were truly outstanding. James Wilson Grimes was without doubt Iowa's most powerful and acceptable spokesman, from the year of his election as governor in 1854 until his vote against the conviction of Andrew Johnson in the impeachment proceedings of 1868. It is hardly to be doubted that he is the greatest statesman in Iowa's history. His influence on Allison is beyond measure. Their close association is attested by the fact that during some part of Allison's eight years in the House, he roomed at the home of Senator and Mrs. Grimes while taking his meals at Wormley's, the famous hotel and eating place of the period, as did the Grimeses.<sup>45</sup> Here he undoubtedly met Mrs. Grimes's beautiful and charming niece, Mary Nealley, whom Senator Grimes legally adopted as his daughter and who eventually became the second Mrs. Allison. As to Allison's opinion of the great Senator's influence, we have the following, written to Mrs. Grimes a short time after Grimes had passed away:

I feel more indebted to Mr. Grimes than any one for the little success I have achieved. His early friendly recognition of me at Washington gave me a position and companionship that would

<sup>43</sup> Hoxie to Dodge, April 5, Dec. 6, 1864, *Dodge Papers*, Boxes 6 and 8; italics added. Edward Younger has in preparation the definitive biography of John A. Kasson. See also Dexter Perkins, “John Adam Kasson,” *Dictionary of American Biography*, 10:260-61.

<sup>44</sup> For Price and Hubbard, see Gue, *History of Iowa*, 4:137, 216-17. See also Charles E. Payne, *Josiah Bushnell Grinnell* (Iowa City, 1938), *passim*. Also see Luella M. Wright, *Peter Melendy* (Iowa City, 1943), a study of one of Grinnell's colleagues in railroad promotion and a partner in frustration.

<sup>45</sup> Ben: Perley Poore (ed.), *The Congressional Directory* (Washington, 1869), 110-111. This is the first Directory in the form that we know it.

otherwise have required years of patient labor [to achieve]. To enjoy his friendship was to secure the confidence of the truest and best men of the country. The inducements to temptation and folly are so great at Washington that, but for his friendly counsel and guidance, I might have yielded to them. In his death the State and the country have suffered a great loss, and the young men who enjoyed his confidence, and looked to him for guidance in the future, will look in vain to find one suited to take his place.<sup>46</sup>

A critic unfriendly to Allison put it in this way in 1867: "I found that what Grimes told him to do he did. . . ." The letters of Jacob Rich, after 1865 the clerk of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs as a protege of Senator Grimes, indicate that Grimes, Allison, and Rich were in perfect harmony as to politics.<sup>47</sup>

Iowa's other Senator was the redoubtable James Harlan of Mount Pleasant, the erstwhile president of Iowa Wesleyan College in that city and so much a leader, spokesman, and defender of the Methodist Church that he was frequently referred to as the "Reverend James Harlan," perhaps sometimes in irony but usually in honest error, it would seem.<sup>48</sup> He could make just as much a claim upon the sentiments of Iowa Republicans as Grimes. As a young itinerant book salesman he had come to Iowa, bringing with him the religious impulse to antislavery beliefs from Indiana Asbury College at Greencastle. He wrote editorials for an Iowa City newspaper called the *Republican* eight years before the Republican party was organized in Iowa.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> William Salter, *The Life of James W. Grimes* (New York, 1876), 388-9.

<sup>47</sup> Judge Jedidiah Brown of Fort Atkinson, Iowa, to Azro B. F. Hildreth, April 14, 1867, cited by Charles Aldrich, *The Life and Times of Azro B. F. Hildreth* (Des Moines, 1891), 398-400. Rich to Kirkwood, Nov. 22, 1865, *Kirkwood Correspondence*, No. 1081.

<sup>48</sup> The present officials of Iowa Wesleyan College inform me that they have no record of the ordination of Mr. Harlan. Letter to the author from Professor John A. Kapp, April 14, 1949. Harlan's biographer makes no mention of his status as a minister. See Johnson Brigham, *James Harlan* (Iowa City, 1913). Aaron W. Haines, *The Makers of Iowa Methodism* (Cincinnati, 1900), 78-81, stresses Harlan's lay leadership in the church.

<sup>49</sup> This statement is based on evidence found in a letter from John Y. Stone of Glenwood to General G. M. Dodge, Jan. 31, 1871, *Dodge Papers*, Box 18. Stone was writing to Dodge about a man named Ballard from whom he was negotiating the purchase of the Glenwood *Opinion*. Stone describes Ballard as a Harlan man in the current contest between Harlan and Allison for the Senate and quotes him as saying that he published the first Republican paper in the state and that Harlan wrote editorials for it. This would have been Thomas Paxton Ballard, a relation of Dr. S. M. Ballard of Iowa City, publisher of the *Iowa City Republican* in 1848. The files of this paper were destroyed in a fire and the assertion can not be checked.

He surely must be counted among the founders of the party even though not present at the meeting on February 22, 1856, when formal organization took place. In Allison's first two terms in Congress, Harlan was at the peak of his power as a Senator and Cabinet member and intimate friend of the presidential family.<sup>50</sup> He was a great booster for railroad construction and for most aspects of the Radical Republican program.<sup>51</sup> Only the exigencies of intraparty politics could ever make these two men rivals.

It would be rewarding to find evidence which would uphold the later champions and eulogists of Allison as to his rapid recognition in Congress and his valuable services and contributions to the war when translated to this "higher realm" of activity. It has not been found. He could be counted upon for a regular vote, but in the main his record is undistinguished. The committee assignments given him by Speaker Schuyler Colfax were to the Committee on Public Lands and the Committee on Roads and Canals.<sup>52</sup> Most of the entries in the *Congressional Globe* are relative to his work on these committees, which had postwar rather than immediate value and significance. His first public act in Congress was to vote for a bill sponsored by his colleague, Hiram Price, a bill calling for a canal connecting the Mississippi River, the Great Lakes, and the Hudson River.<sup>53</sup> On the same day he made his first legislative proposal, a resolution "That the Committee on Roads and Canals be instructed to inquire into the expediency and necessity of improving the upper rapids of the Mississippi River by a canal commencing at Davenport, at the foot of such rapids, with leave to report by bill or otherwise." Holman of Indiana moved to table the resolution but was not upheld. Allison's bill was then voted on and passed,<sup>54</sup> and thus his career as a legislator was fully launched with a bill that would do something for all those interested in river commerce, including Dubuquers. A short

<sup>50</sup> His daughter was married to Robert Todd Lincoln in 1868.

<sup>51</sup> R. R. Russel, *Improvement of Communication with the Pacific Coast as a Factor in American Politics, 1783-1864* (Cedar Rapids, 1948), has many allusions to Harlan's activity in sponsoring railway legislation. Harlan's record was generally that of a vigorous Radical Republican, as was Grimes's until the latter part of his career, although Professor James G. Randall classifies them differently in his *Lincoln the President*, 2:217. On Harlan as a Radical in the cabinet of Conservative Andrew Johnson, see Howard K. Beale, *The Critical Year, A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (New York, 1930), 65, 99-100, 106, 127, 266.

<sup>52</sup> *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 Sess., 18.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-5.



time later his career as a "railroad" Congressman was begun. On January 20, 1864, he secured unanimous consent to introduce a bill to make a grant of land to the state of Iowa to aid in the construction of two railroads in the state, the McGregor and Western Railroad and the Cedar Falls and Minnesota Railroad.<sup>55</sup> The bill was referred to the Committee on Public Lands.

One of his more important votes, one which serves as a test of his attitude on Reconstruction, was delivered on February 5, 1864, on the so-called Homesteads on Forfeited Estates Act. The purpose of the legislation was to punish the seceding states by confiscating estates in the insurrectionary areas and rewarding the supporters of the Union by allocating these lands as homesteads to those who had been in military or naval service of the United States. Allison voted for the bill (House Resolution No. 18) as he did later when he spoke in favor of the same idea incorporated in House Bill No. 276.<sup>56</sup> Support of this bill was one of the criteria by which men were adjudged to be or not to be "radical" Republicans, and it would seem that Allison passed it with flying colors. N. C. Deering of Osage, an Iowan of some note, himself later a Congressman, heard Allison's speech in support of his vote. He reported on it as follows:

Our Representative Col. Allison, made an able and appropriate speech in the House last evening. I happened to be present and hear it. The speech and the manner of delivery were creditable both to himself and to our District. When will our Congressional Convention be held, and will there be any opposition to Mr. Allison's renomination?<sup>57</sup>

Soon Allison was again serving the railroad interests. The *Congressional Globe* shows that by unanimous consent he introduced a bill to amend the Act of May 15, 1856 (the Pacific Railway Act). His bill incorporated a provision sponsored by James F. Wilson that the railroad must run through the cities of Des Moines and Council Bluffs, also that other roads might connect and run over the same route, sharing in the land grants and the expense.<sup>58</sup> General G. M. Dodge was not too busy winning the war to keep up with the proceedings in Washington when railroads were at stake.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 281. Also see Wright, *Peter Melendy*, 215-23.

<sup>56</sup> *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 Sess., 519, 2113-17.

<sup>57</sup> Deering to Hildreth, May 5, 1864, cited in Aldrich, *Azro B. F. Hildreth*, 381.

<sup>58</sup> *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 Sess., 706 (Feb. 17, 1864).



His letter of inquiry to John A. Kasson was answered by the ubiquitous Herbert M. Hoxie.

Your letter dated [February] 21st to Mr. Kasson came this night and by his request I am answering it. Allison introduced the bill for two reasons. One that he was on the Land Committee, the other that we wanted to commit him to its provisions. . . . [The Cedar Rapids folks were trying to by-pass Des Moines and cross the river at De Soto.] This matter was brought up and I was immediately telegraphed to & I at once came down to this city. I shall stay until March 10th. . . . Doctor Durant is now in New York. He will return next Wednesday. He telegraphs that he has made arrangements to raise one million dollars and says he will push the road through at once. The doctor means to play fair I think. . . .<sup>59</sup>

Thus an act of service was performed for General Dodge and Council Bluffs by William Boyd Allison and the ties of partnership strengthened.

In the weeks that follow, Allison's duties and actions were inconspicuous, mostly routine maneuvers to keep his Committee at work on the bill to grant lands for aid in building railroads in Iowa and Minnesota. Finally on April 26 he was able to report H. R. No. 159 from his committee and get it passed. This bill provided aid to the aforementioned McGregor and Western and a road from Sioux City to Minnesota, said roads to meet at a point and continue to Minneapolis and St. Paul.<sup>60</sup> This road from McGregor eventually became a link in the "Milwaukee System" serving northeastern Iowa, with Mason City as its headquarters. Allison frequently made political capital out of his part in the undertaking, more than once citing it as an example of service when asked "What has Allison done for Iowa?"<sup>61</sup> Allison's own opinion of his bill is seen in a letter to Editor Hildreth.

I have succeeded in getting through the House for you my McGregor land grant bill. It will also pass the Senate; probably today. The bill is preferable to Senator Harlan's for the reason that it is of *present* [italics added] benefit to the Railroad Company. Mr. Harlan's bill only allowed the Railroad Company co-terminous sections of land to road actually built, thus compelling

<sup>59</sup> Hoxie to Dodge, Feb. 27, 1864, *Dodge Papers*, Box 6.

<sup>60</sup> *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 Sess., 1886-7 (April 26, 1864).

<sup>61</sup> See the *Allison Papers*, Box 362, for 1907-1908, when Allison was making his last race for office and was being pushed mightily by Albert B. Cummins for the Republican nomination for Senator.

them to build one hundred and fifty miles or more of road before they could get any lands. Under my bill they draw lands for every ten miles, and must build twenty miles each and every year or forfeit the grant. Mr. Harlan will accept the proposition. Judge Hubbard from Sioux City, has faithfully stood by me in the matter, although seemingly against his interest. But he believes with me that it is better to give the company immediate aid so as to insure the completion of the road, at least to the Cedar River Valley, without delay.<sup>62</sup>

Senator Harlan, a member of the Public Lands Committee in the Senate, took the amended bill through the Senate and it became law on May 12, 1864.<sup>63</sup>

Further actions of Allison in the area of railroad interests in the Thirty-eighth Congress were rather limited, one successful and one not so. He secured an amendment to H. R. No. 438 which was itself an effort to amend the Act of 1862 giving aid to a railroad from the Missouri River to the Pacific. Allison's amendment read: "Provided, that no bonds shall be issued or land certified by the United States to any person or company for the construction of any part of the main trunk line of said railroad west of the hundredth meridian of longitude and east of the Rocky Mountains until said road shall be completed from or near Omaha . . . to the said one hundredth meridian of longitude."<sup>64</sup> His defeat came on H. R. No. 710 relating to certain grants of lands made to the state of Michigan for railroads. Representative Rufus P. Spalding of Ohio was his nemesis on this bill, and it was lost by a vote of 58 to 56, with 68 not voting including Grinnell, Price, Hubbard, and Kasson.<sup>65</sup>

As one surveys the personal affairs of Allison in the year 1864, it can be plainly seen that he quickly adjusted himself to the congressional and political "game." A series of letters only recently made available discloses the manner in which he made himself "useful" to certain interests in Dubuque and the East. In letters of 1864 to 1866, Platt Smith, vice-president and attorney for the Dubuque, Sioux City & Pacific Railroad (eventually a link in the Illinois Central system), and also a promoter of the Dubuque & Southwestern, gives the most explicit instructions to Allison as to what he

<sup>62</sup> Aldrich, *Azro B. F. Hilreth*, 379-80.

<sup>63</sup> 13 *U. S. Statutes at Large*, 72.

<sup>64</sup> *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 1 Sess., 3244 (June 24, 1864).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 38 Cong., 2 Sess., 796-7, 807-808.

must do. Only certain letters can be quoted here as illustrations. The dates fall just outside the purview of this article, but the letters refer to business going back to 1864-1865.

Herewith I enclose you the draft of an act which I would like to have passed. I wish you would send me a copy of Judge Hubbard's proposed act. The first section of the enclosed act extends the benefit of the extension clause in the act of 3 March 1865, to the Dub & Sioux City as well as to the other land grant companies. Secy Harlan with the advice of Major Mobley came to the conclusion that the extension of time applied to the other companies & not to the Dubuque & Sioux City. I think that a forced construction, but wish to obviate doubt. . . . Your friend Ames will give you all the assistance in his power no doubt, to get through that provision.<sup>66</sup>

A second letter asked Allison to make a motion for leave for him (Smith) to intervene in two cases.

Friday is motion day in the Supreme Court. I wish you would make the motions and put the affidavits on file immediately. Get the allowance of a couple of weeks to file printed arguments. I enclose you fifty dollars so that you may not forget to make the motion.<sup>67</sup>

A letter from Smith to Oakes Ames clinches the matter. In this letter Smith complains that he has heard nothing of the bills he drew up while in Washington.

As to the bill authorizing the settlement between your company & the South Western, if you & Mr. Allison see proper to insert a provision that the Companies will divide the lands equally between them — all right. In fact I understand you & Mr. Allison will dispose of that matter yourselves in your own way. . . .<sup>68</sup>

These letters establish the fact that in Smith's eyes Allison was nothing more than a legislative agent for his company, and Allison was expected to be the intermediary between the Dubuque investors and the Eastern financial interests and the "fixer" in Congress for all concerned. Just where the line should be drawn between legitimate action on behalf of constituents

<sup>66</sup> Platt Smith to Allison, Jan. 5, 1866, *Illinois Central Papers* (Newberry Library, Chicago), 8 D8.16, Vol. 2.

<sup>67</sup> Smith to Allison, Feb. 2, 1866, *ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Smith to Oakes Ames, March 13, 1866, *ibid.*



and illegitimate or at least unethical use of his position would be difficult to determine. In these matters it is always asserted that the standards of the nineteenth century, especially during and after the Civil War, are not the standards of the twentieth century.

At least one should note well the allusions to Allison's friendship and cooperation with Oakes Ames. A few years later, when testifying as a defendant in the Credit Mobilier hearings, Allison affected an air of injured innocence and "got away" with the impression that he had been preyed upon by a sharpster of whom he knew nothing.<sup>69</sup> Actually Allison had been playing the railroad promotion game from the inside for years, and Ames was well known to him.

Republican party fortunes seemed at a low ebb in 1864. There was a great deal of dissatisfaction within the party over President Lincoln's policies. Some of the more radical members went off on a tangent and nominated General John C. Fremont in a meeting at Cleveland on May 31; others flirted strongly with the idea of nominating the Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase. It would be interesting to know how much attention Allison gave to this idea; as an old Chase man, he probably gave assurances to Chase as did Senator Grimes among others.<sup>70</sup> Allison was not a delegate to the National Convention that met at Baltimore and dutifully but unenthusiastically renominated Lincoln; at least one if not more of the Iowa delegation called on him at Washington en route to Baltimore, and the entire delegation, accompanied by the Iowa members of Congress, called on Secretary Chase, a not altogether insignificant fact.<sup>71</sup> Shortly after the convention, Allison joined Senator Grimes and Representatives Grinnell and Hubbard in urging ex-Governor Kirkwood to allow himself to be placed at the head of the party ticket as an Elector for Iowa, not only because it would help the party but because it would also help to keep Kirkwood before the people as a prospect for the Senate race in 1866. Allison was cited as being strongly in favor of the latter point.<sup>72</sup>

The Republican leaders' enthusiasm for Lincoln dimmed almost to the

<sup>69</sup> Allison's testimony is in the "Poland Report," *Reports of Committees . . . H. of R.*, 42 Cong., 3 Sess., Feb. 18, 1873, Report No. 77, pp. 304-308.

<sup>70</sup> T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals* (Madison, 1941), 306-333, summarizes a mass of evidence on this subject, covering the years 1863-1864.

<sup>71</sup> Peter Melendy letter to the Cedar Falls *Gazette*, June 17, 1864.

<sup>72</sup> Jacob Rich to Kirkwood, June 27, 1864, *Kirkwood Correspondence*, Box 2, No. 945.



point of invisibility in July and early August. It was at this point (July 2) that Congress passed the Wade-Davis Act which clashed so directly with the executive policy for reconstruction announced in the previous December. Allison voted for this act as did all the other members of the Iowa delegation except John A. Kasson. A plot was hatched by certain members of the party to call on Lincoln to resign and allow the nomination of someone else. Allison's participation in this plot has not been completely proved, but he is on record with the following sentiment as expressed to Secretary of War E. M. Stanton, a bitter opponent of the President:

I thank you in the name of my constituents for the firm position you have taken agst the obstinate and unjust man who holds the executive power of the Nation. I can say that for myself so far as I have any power, it shall be used faithfully to uphold you. I need not ask you to stand firm, as I am very clear that you will. I have seen many men of prominence here [New York City] & they are all with you. Pardon me for troubling you.<sup>73</sup>

Fortunately for Lincoln and for the country, a turn in the military fortunes of the Union forces produced a new enthusiasm for the cause.

Allison's own renomination was a foregone conclusion. At the district nominating convention held at West Union on August 24 he was nominated by acclamation and accepted the honor in a "neat and pertinent speech."<sup>74</sup> His Democratic opponent was again a fellow-townsmen, but one of more patriotic sentiments than his predecessor of 1862, Mr. Benjamin Billings Richards. It seems impossible that the Union men should have felt any qualms about the results, but Allison displayed here the caution that marked his entire career, as witness the following appeal to Kirkwood:

I have been renominated and the Peace Men have presented their candidates and platform. My own judgment is from what I have seen that the present condition of affairs requires a vigorous canvass on our part. The Copperheads here & most of the War Democrats here are jubilant for McLellan [sic]. I mean those War Democrats who have never formally acted with us. At the Congressional Convention most of the leading men in my District expressed an earnest desire that you should canvass this part of the

<sup>73</sup> Allison to E. M. Stanton, Aug. 11, 1864, *Edwin M. Stanton Papers* (Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress). The author has found only a few routine and insignificant letters from Allison to Lincoln in the Robert Todd Lincoln Papers.

<sup>74</sup> *Charles City Intelligencer*, Sept. 1, 1864.

State. I think owing to the local prejudices in the North against some men in the South & Central, that you are one of the few who can satisfy all, and do good. . . . I therefore wish . . . that you can spend at least two weeks in my District. I think it will be not only bread cast upon the waters, but result in immediate good to us all, & our cause. I am quite anxious on this subject. . . .

On the back of this letter the following endorsement was made: "Friend Price, Please read the enclosed—I must go up and help Allison. So you must go on without me. . . . S. J. Kirkwood." "All right Gov. I am glad you can & will help Allison. . . . My competitor is Geo. H. Parker, as bitter a Cop. as they make these days. H. P." <sup>75</sup>

The campaign was not very exciting. Even the Dubuque *Herald*, the Democratic organ, paid little attention to the race. There was some joshing of Allison to the effect that he had promised to volunteer for military service but had backed down and a substitute had been employed.<sup>76</sup> All this may have amused the readers but changed nothing as to the final results. True to form, the Democrat, Richards, carried the Gibraltar of Iowa Democracy by 3,316 to 1,753, almost identical with the figures on the presidential race (McClellan 3,317, Lincoln 1,742). Even Allison's own township went for Richards, 1,345 to 1,007, but the rest of the district easily overcame this disadvantage. All other Republican members of the Iowa delegation were re-elected, and Lincoln carried the state and enough of the country to win, partly due to the heroic work of Senator Zachariah Chandler of Michigan in securing the withdrawal of Fremont as a rival candidate and also placating the Radicals by securing the dismissal of Montgomery Blair from the cabinet.<sup>77</sup>

The remainder of Allison's congressional term was uneventful as far as his own activity was concerned. His work was closed out by securing the passage of a resolution instructing the Ways and Means Committee to "inquire into the expediency of establishing in the Treasury Department a bureau to be called the Bureau of Statistics, for the collection and publication annually of the statistics of external and internal commerce, also agri-

<sup>75</sup> Allison to Kirkwood, Sept. 2, 1864, *Kirkwood Correspondence*, Box 2, No. 949.

<sup>76</sup> Oldt (ed.), *History of Dubuque County*, 308, quotes the *Dubuque Herald* to the effect that Allison secured a substitute for \$150.

<sup>77</sup> Winfred A. Harbison (ed.), "Zachariah Chandler's Part in the Re-election of Abraham Lincoln," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 22:267-76 (September, 1935).

cultural, mineral, and manufactured productions, with leave to report by bill or otherwise";<sup>78</sup> and in opposition to a proposed sales tax included in H. R. 744. He compared the sales tax on foodstuffs to the Spanish "alcavala" and warmly defended the Western states and the Eastern states outside the cities. His amendments were lost.<sup>79</sup>

Thus closed unspectacularly the first term in Congress of a man who was destined to go on for three more terms in the House and then, after a defeat in his first trial for election to the Senate, and after an interval of two years, was successful in defeating the great Senator Harlan himself and thus launching a senatorial career that lasted thirty-five years and five months.

<sup>78</sup> *Cong. Globe*, 38 Cong., 2 Sess., 500 (Jan. 30, 1865).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 566-70, 875, 879.

DOCUMENTS  
THE CIVIL WAR DIARY OF C. F. BOYD,  
FIFTEENTH IOWA INFANTRY  
PART IV\*  
*Edited by Mildred Throne*

*Camp at Lafayette Tennessee*

Jan'y 1st 1863 Companies "G" and "D" were ordered to Lafayette station to guard the commissary stores just come in from Memphis<sup>1</sup> We relieved the 93d Indiana We have established a few forts around the depot and water tank Lafayette has but one citizen left and that is a widow woman. The town has had about 150 inhabitants There is but one good dwelling in the place There is a fine large brick depot and warehouse Our Surgeon took the best house in town for his headquarters But had hardly got it warmed before Hugh T Reid came and dispossessed him and proceeded to fix himself in it. But he had scarcely become used to its comforts when Genl Quinby [Brig.-Gen. Isaac F. Quinby, 13th Army Corps] came along and notified Mr Reid that he should want that "house" for his own use So Mr Reid took an humble abode and "grated" his teeth Guerrillas swarm all through this country and last night one of the 93d Indiana was wounded on Picket We cannot forage here without a guard

We found a few copies of the "Chicago Times" here. It is the best Rebel authority to be had and it says Burnside lost 12,500 men in the late battle<sup>2</sup>

\*Parts I, II, and III appeared in the January, April, and July, 1952, issues of the JOURNAL.

<sup>1</sup>The 15th Iowa, as part of the 3rd — Crocker's — Brigade of the 6th Division of the 17th Army Corps, was assigned to the protection of the Memphis & Charleston RR. Stationed at Lafayette, Tenn., the Regiment took part in several skirmishes against Rebel guerrillas. [William W. Belknap], *History of the Fifteenth Regiment, Iowa Veteran Volunteer Infantry* . . . (Keokuk, 1887), 236.

<sup>2</sup>The *Chicago Times* was a Democratic newspaper which grew increasingly bitter against Lincoln as the war progressed. Wood Gray, *The Hidden Civil War: The Story of the Copperheads* (New York, 1942), 98-9. The battle referred to is probably Burnside's heavy loss of 12,000 Union troops at the Battle of Fredericksburg on December 13, 1862. T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York, 1952), 199.



We have received no Mail since we left Abbeville. All think the mails have been cut off because of the bad news. The weather is cool and fine

*Jany 2d* The great train of wagons from Memphis commenced unloading at the Depot and Warehouse last night. There was so much noise no one could sleep The men detailed to unload the wagons had their regular rations of whiskey every two hours and some of them got a little too loose before morning The[y] bursted open barrels and boxes all over the platform and tore things up generally The teamsters were about all *tight* and several of them let their teams run away and such halooing and shouting and swearing I never heard

An Engine came up from Moscow and found the track clear to this point Genl McArthur was on the Engine. Soon some cars came down with a lot of Engineers and workmen They run west to repair a bridge about two miles But just as they got to work about 20 guerrillas attacked them The guard a Company of Wis troops all ran back here without making a fight Instantly there was an alarm and the "long roll" beat and we fell into line The 13th [Iowa] with our Regt<sup>3</sup> was hurried northward and gone about half a day. We captured 75 head of hogs and 30 head cattle that would *not* take the oath of allegiance to the United States

A train of cars left this afternoon for Corinth loaded with provisions To-day 2 guerrillas were captured and brought in. One of them had 40 Negroes hid out and they too came in and went into a little frame house. Such a lot of pagans I never saw They are almost naked and as ignorant as beasts from old grand mother down to suckling child Their Master had them hid out with a lot of mules horses and hogs and our men *drove* them all in *together* The aristocracy goes with the field hands "The tail goes with the hide" in this new order of things

This eve our boys being on guard at the Depot discovered a barrel of white sugar among a lot of barrels of salt and they rolled it under the Depot and after dark brought it to camp and we shall have syrup and *taffy* for some time

*Jany 3d* Last night was a terrific one The wind which had been blowing [sic] so hard all day increased to a hurricane and blue [sic] with fury all night tearing down tents and everything loose About 2 oclock at night a heavy rain storm set in which added much to our uncomfortable condition

<sup>3</sup> According to Belknap's account, it was the 15th and 16th Iowa Regiments which took part in this foray. [Belknap], *History of the Fifteenth Iowa . . .*, 236.

In the darkness could be heard men driving stakes and hallooing to everybody and swearing like the "Army in Flanders" This morning the water stood about one inch in our tent Most of our Company were at the Depot and their tents were blown down and everything wet, and when they were relieved came to camp and had a good time raising tents Corp Kitchell cooks for our mess and we have plenty to eat and are happy

An order came from Genl Grant to have our arms in good condition and to be ready for *action* at a moments notice Van Dorn threatens our communications again and may strike us at any time

*Jan'y 4th Sunday:* Last night the rain pounded down most of the night But this morning the sky was clear except a heavy bank of clouds to the eastward The sun has dried up the mud Cars are running from Memphis to Corinth. We get no mail. It is suppressed or destroyed News of fighting at Vicksburgh and Murphreysboro. . .<sup>4</sup>

*Jan'y 5th* Lieut Fisk came to us to-day How glad we were to see him Nine months ago he was captured at Pittsburgh Landing and he has been a prisoner in Montgomery, Macon, Selma and other places in the South He looks well and his fine new suit in great contrast with our weather beaten uniforms The Lieut brought me \$5.00 and 68 postage stamps for which I was very grateful

Have been very busy all day on Pay Rolls — Had an alarm in Camp and were just *two* minutes getting into line with our arms Went Northward two miles and met some of our cavalry who told us there was no enemy in that direction and we returned The night was cold and frosty

*Jan'y 7th* To-day has been wet muddy and gloomy. No mail and no news This eve Elias Reid and David Elliott returned from leave of absence

<sup>4</sup> This "news of fighting" probably refers to Sherman's failure to reach Vicksburg from the Yazoo River, which flows into the Mississippi above Vicksburg. Sherman, in conjunction with Admiral Porter, had transported 30,000 men from Memphis down the Mississippi to the Yazoo and up that river to Chickasaw Bayou, reaching there on December 26, 1862. They expected to be supported by Grant at the rear of Vicksburg, not knowing of Grant's setback at Holly Springs. The swampy terrain between the Yazoo and Vicksburg, coupled with large forces within that city, forced Sherman to withdraw after heavy losses. *Memoirs of Gen. W. T. Sherman* . . . (2 vols., New York, 1891), 1:317-21. The Battle of Murfreesboro (or Stone River) in eastern Tennessee was an encounter between Bragg and Rosecrans, who had replaced Buell in command of the Army of the Cumberland, in which the Union forces had been successful. The bitterly fought battle had lasted from December 31, 1862, to January 4, 1863. *Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan* . . . (2 vols., New York, 1888), 1:237-45; Otto Eisenschiml and Ralph Newman, *The American Iliad* . . . (Indianapolis, 1947), 291-314.

Both were wounded at Corinth Samuel Roberts who was taken prisoner at the same time also came in and looking well Sam Stanford [Stanfield] returned from *desertion* He deserted July 13th and escaped into Ills where he was arrested and taken to St Louis He is a big strong fellow and looks rather *sheepish*

*Jany 8th* Our mess has been busy putting on an addition to our tent of lumber and now we are very comfortable We have a stove inside But alas for all the comfort a soldier can hope for or dream of. Just at dark an order came to be ready at a moments notice to *march*

Uncle John Steele of the 4th Ills Cav. came over and we had a long talk This forenoon while we were building our *but* we ran out of nails and Corp Kitchell and I went down town to find some and seeing a paling fence we knocked off a few palings and carried them to camp for the nails and the wood. About the time we got to the tent Col Reid rode up and enquired for the men who had taken the palings We told him that we were the *lads* He said when he wanted the town *torn down* and the fence taken away from around his horses he would send for *us* He ordered us to take the palings back and nail them on where we found them We told him it should be done and with our loads on our shoulders we *countermarched*

*Jany 9th* There was four nails in each paling and we pulled *three* out and tacked the other nail on just enough to hold till morning and then we packed about one half the palings back and hid them The bal of the company thought it a good joke on us — but we thought our *generous* commander had not made much out of the *operation*

*Jany 10th* Weather clear and warm Drew *five* days Rations Two trains from Memphis to-day Bad news from Vicksburgh Genl Sherman made an assault on the place and we have lost heavily and the Army has fallen back on the Yazoo and are mostly at Napoleon Ark Banks and Faragut failed to come up the River and the whole plan failed<sup>5</sup>

*Jany 11th Sunday:* Clear and fine weather I have made out three Pay Rolls today I do not make it my choice of working to-day but military necessity compels

*March toward Memphis Tennessee*

*Jany 12th* This morning at 7 o'clock A M Brigade started with our Regt in advance The day was fine and we traveled steadily Came through

<sup>5</sup> This would indicate that they had received confirmation of the fighting referred to in footnote 4.



Collierville a small village entirely deserted The 17th Iowa was here Saw Lieut Woodrow He has resigned 16 miles from Lafayette we passed through Germantown a place of about 400 inhabitants We came on westward 4 miles and camped close to a sta[tion] on the Railroad. Came 22 miles to-day and many of the men gave out Lieut Fisk was very sore footed . . .

*Camp at Memphis*

Jan'y 13th We started at daylight this morning and made a march of 9 miles and came to the suburbs of Memphis Here we were brought into line and notified to sign Pay Rolls We put up our tents and signed Rolls — then I took a ramble thro' Memphis It was 2 miles to the River from camp Saw a camp of Contrabands containing old and young 1500 and they were packed into a building about 200 x 150 feet They were a mass of filthy and abandoned creatures Down at the wharf there was a long line of steamers lying along the bank Saw one gun boat anchored in the stream There is a view up the River of about five miles and ten or twelve miles down the stream Memphis is situated on high bluffs and has a beautiful location The business portion is built of brick Lafayette Square is the center of the city and is a beautiful Park full of Evergreens and tame squirrels are numerous among the trees and follow strangers all around

Whiskey O Whiskey! Drunk men staggered on all the streets In every store The saloons were full of *drunk men* The men who had fought their way from Donelson to Corinth and who had met no enemy able to whip them now surrendered to Gen'l *Intoxication*<sup>6</sup> Some were on the side walks and both hands full of brick bats and swearing that the side walks were made for soldiers and not for any d——d niggers Some were wallowing in the streets dead drunk others were being loaded on drays and into wagons and tied hand and foot and taken to the Calabose or guardhouse or to Camp Several of Co "G" are down this evening with the general complaint The whiskey here seems to be very effective at short range

I found some wheat bread the first I have seen for two months Sergt Gray came near getting shot this evening about dark He was *full* and in camp He saw a mounted orderly coming past in hot haste and he halted

<sup>6</sup> Excessive drinking remained a problem throughout the war. "Since drinking was largely a matter of opportunity, intemperance was most common during changes of station, especially those requiring passage through cities, on holidays and at pay-time." Bell I. Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank* . . . (Indianapolis, 1951), 253.



him and made the orderly give him the countersign Afterwards the aide discovered that he had been delayed without cause and he drew his revolver and if Gray had not run and hid himself he would have got a bullet Gray gave him the dodge around the tents and finally reached one where he lay down and the boys covered him up and he was snoring away in 2 seconds

*Jany 14th* This has been a most disagreeable day. The rain poured down and our tents leaked and we have no wood nor stoves Many men lay in the gutter or the guard house last night Some of Co "K" came over to our tent this eve and bored us for a long time They were *drunk* and came over to tell me that I was the best Orderly in the Regt and the most abused man — I humored them some and finally got them to leave Anything almost is better than the sympathy of a *drunk* man About two thirds of the Regiment went down into the city and not more than one third returned The *spree* still goes on

*Jany 15th* This morning when we awoke the snow was pouring down and the camp and the ground was covered to the depth of ten inches of solid snow right here in the City of Memphis in the state of Tennessee and in the midst of the *hot* southern Confederacy We call this very *cool* treatment We had heretofore been received in the *warmest* manner of which the natives were capable Very few remained in camp to get breakfast

The camp guards stuck their bayonets into the ground — left their beats and slunk away to some house Sergt Gray was equal to this occasion as he has been to all others and he was soon out. When he came back he told us he had made up his mind to *reside* in a two story frame house in the city and had made arrangements for *meals* &c We followed him and found good quarters in a large frame building The men came here many of them barefooted and their clothes in rags and they have been buying and *stealing* a great deal of stuff to-day. A Company will go into a store to fit themselves out in boots and before they get away about one half will have bought boots and the other half stolen about the same amount of stuff I attended the Theatre this eve The house was full of soldiers and about one half of them were *full* and there was a jolly time and no mistake The play was the "Hidden Hand" and was very good

*Jany 16th* The weather is milder and the snow thawed some The men are scattered all over the city and laying around loose One week here will be worse for them than six months in the field

Jan'y 17<sup>th</sup> The snow thawed considerable to-day The 34<sup>th</sup> Iowa came from below to-day I went down to the River to see them I found them on two steamers guarding 4800 Confederate prisoners captured at Arkansas Post<sup>7</sup> The 34<sup>th</sup> is in bad spirits about nine tenths of the men are sick and such a discouraged and disheartened lot of men I never saw The 15<sup>th</sup> Regt in her gloomiest days did not look so bad. Col Clark looked well but the men from exposure and the smallpox looked awful

The Cabins of the two vessels were packed with sick and dying men They lay in their filth so close that it was difficult to walk thro the boat<sup>8</sup> The prisoners were the best looking set of men that I have seen in the Confederate service The Rebel Genl Churchill and 300 Confederate officers were at one end of a boat in the Cabin<sup>9</sup> Their friends here in Memphis came down by hundreds and brought them many things Nothing seemed to comfort them like copies of the "Chicago Times" They devoured their contents with more relish than their food Most of them were Texas and Ark men. To night is piercing cold and we can hardly keep warm with all the lumber and palings we can get into the big fire place Gray is too full for utterance tonight This afternoon he went to the Capt and told him he

<sup>7</sup> The 34<sup>th</sup> Iowa, to which Boyd later transferred as a lieutenant, had been mustered into service at Burlington, Oct. 15, 1862, and had fought with Sherman at Chickasaw Bayou and at Arkansas Post, a fort on the Arkansas River, about forty miles from its confluence with the Mississippi River. Arkansas Post had been captured by Sherman and McClernand in an expedition undertaken in conjunction with Admiral David D. Porter on January 11, 1863. The fall of the Fort there — known as Fort Hindman — was of great aid to the Union forces in protecting their assault on Vicksburg. See Sherman, *Memoirs*, 1:324–31; *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant* (2 vols., New York, 1885), 1:439–40; Admiral David D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War* (New York, 1886), 289–93; *The War of the Rebellion . . . Official Records . . .* (Washington, 1886), Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 698–796 (hereafter referred to as *Official Records*); [J. S. Clark], *The Thirty-fourth Iowa Regiment . . .* (Des Moines, 1892), 7–10.

<sup>8</sup> "One hesitates to attempt a description of the suffering of this trip to Chicago which resulted from packing and jamming of about 5,500 men on three moderate sized boats. The cases of small pox were greatly multiplied in the regiment and before we reached St. Louis the disease broke out among the prisoners. . . . The state rooms were filled with sick. The floors of the cabin were covered with the sick of our own regiment, and also sick rebels, all lying closely together, some with fever, some with pneumonia, some with measles, some with small pox, all with chronic diarrhea. There were not enough well men to properly guard the prisoners and care for the sick." [Clark], *Thirty-fourth Iowa Regiment . . .*, 11.

<sup>9</sup> "Among the 4,791 prisoners were Gen. [Thomas J.] Churchill, rebel general commanding, and his staff; seven colonels; about fifteen lieutenant-colonels and majors, and 330 other officers." *Ibid.*, 10.

had concluded to *resign* and turned over his gun and accoutrements to him He supposes that he can *resign* as he has got his whiskey *mixed*

*Big Spree at Memphis Tennessee*

*Jan 18th Sunday:* This morning at 8 oclock we struck tents and marched to the Landing and when we got to the bluff above we formed in line and had to stand in the slush and mud until 4 oclock in the evening when we got aboard the Steamer Minnehaha that same old boat that carried us to Pittsburgh Landing<sup>10</sup> We have a superstitious idea about this vessel and that she will again carry us into some *trouble* Our Regt and the 16th Iowa are both crowded onto this boat Co "G" is located on the boiler deck and here we and Co "B" and the entire baggage of the Regiment are all packed The place is as dark as Hades We cannot see in the day time without candles The men climbed on top of the baggage and some into the bunks of the crew and wherever else they could until every space a foot square was filled

During the night — while still at the wharf — the men run the *guards* and made a raid on a large lot of Sutlers goods on shore They carried on board all kinds of goods — especialy cases of canned fruit and champagne and whiskey with wine and brandy Hats, caps, boots and shoes Soon all this became badly *mixed* and the roar commenced. Such a bedlam was never seen The men were soon *drunk* and the whole command became demoralized — The most of the officers were of course in the Cabin but their slumbers were soon disturbed by the *earthquake* around the boiler deck and they came down and tried to quiet the *different drinks* that had been taken but it was no use they could do nothing with them The men swore they were going to *Vicksburgh* and to *hell* and they intended to have a *good time now* One fellow fell overboard and was *fished* out and laid out in the Cabin to *dry* Co "A" were almost all *drunk* and were fighting like dogs among themselves all night and several badly used noses were visible in the flickering candlelight

*Sobering up at Memphis Tennessee*

*Jany 19th* Last night there was a tremendous rain which drove the men from the hurricane deck and they came down and huddled about the boilers

<sup>10</sup> "January 18th the 15th and 16th Iowa were embarked on the steamer Minnehaha . . . and the several regiments and batteries of the 6th division were embarked on fourteen other steamers, the Platte Valley being the flagship. On the 20th the 6th division had 6,115 men present and 16 pieces of artillery. On this day



I never saw so many *noses* out of repair and mutilated faces and black eyes as there are aboard this boat Drinking and fighting filled up last nights hours.

To-day was cool and cloudy and a light fog hung over the river The men run rampant over the boat some were fighting and some were *bugging* each other and some were patching up their wounds and some hung their heads over the boat and cast up their accounts To be shut up among such a gang of *brutes* makes me think that I should just as soon be in *hell* at once

Major Cunningham Capt Mattesen [Madison] and Capt Studer received their *Release* from the service here and will leave for more congenial places Cunningham never came to bid Co "G" *good-bye* but he *sneaked* away and was only too glad to escape without seeing any of us. He is one of those noiseless *vipers* that lie in the sunshine and when no warning can be given his victim he will strike at him when defenseless I shall never forget how popular he was when elected Captain of Co "G" Nor shall I forget how mean he has treated the Company and with what *little regret* we feel at his timely departure He carries away with him his "*bullet proof vest*" and over \$30.00 of commutation money that belongs to the poor sick men who are now alive and the joint property of some who have gone to *premature graves* for the want of some little delicacy or necessity that might have kept them *alive* While he remained he was one of the *vermin* that lived around the kennel of H. T. Reid and through that meanest of all men he inherited all the Rank he received above Capt

Capt Mattison was liked by his men and Capt Studer was a good fellow but he could not *adjust* himself to the men of Co "B" whom he called "*Arabs*" Capt Hedrick of Co "K" will take Cunninghams place as Major of the Regiment and as good a whole souled man as ever carried a sword

#### *A Few Thoughts at Memphis Tenn*

Great opposition is being made some places in the North to President Lincolns Proclamation of Emancipation and the states of Indiana and Illinois seem bent upon fixing up a *rotten* Peace with the Southern Confederacy The times look gloomy and the darkness that surrounds the Republic can almost be *felt* *Traitors* at home and defeat in the field seem to be working

the fleet started toward Vicksburg, where several corps were already stationed on the Louisiana side of the river, now to try unitedly the solution of the great military problem which had just proved a failure to the winter expedition on land, and also at Chickasaw Bayou." [Belknap], *History of the Fifteenth Iowa . . .*, 238-9.



a Counter Revolution I am satisfied more every day that many of our leading men care for nothing beyond their salaries and what they can steal Treason is gnawing at our vitals at home and men in the army are discouraged

Shall I ever forget how dark and intensely hopeless every feature of our struggle looks now The eastern army is totally routed and the enemy is strong and defiant everywhere There are almost enough traitors at home to wipe out the loyal men who are not in the army Hired [illegible] and assassins are being sent to Canada to burn our cities along the Lakes and assassinate our Rulers — through their agents and sympathizers in the United States Men in our ranks are getting letters from "Copperheads" in the North advising them to desert the abolition army This may be that dark hour just before dawn. I know it cannot get much darker <sup>11</sup>

*Embarkation of Grant's Army at Memphis, Tenn*

Jan'y 20th Just at noon the steamers of the fleet got up steam and in half an hour the flag-ship "Platte Valley" backed into the stream and turned her bow to the North The other vessels followed and when above the City a mile or two the Platte turned in a counter march and the other vessels followed amid the music of the bands on board each vessel and the firing of cannon on shore Thousands stood on the shore and waved flags and cheered as the long winding fleet turned to the South All the boats were loaded with the blue uniforms of the great Army which had never yet been defeated together with the waving flags and shouts of the men whose faces were set for the Western Gibraltar of the Confederacy at Vicksburgh It was the most inspiring sight yet seen on the old "father of waters" on this January morning of the New Year This was the great advance and every one seemed hopeful as we turned toward the South

We went in the following order <sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> This was indeed a "period of despair" in the North and among the Union forces. Losses in the field, both on the Potomac and the Mississippi, and the increased activities of the "Peace Democrats" — the so-called Copperheads — who pled for a peace without victory were pressing hard on Lincoln and the administration. For the newest work on the Copperhead movement, see Gray, *The Hidden Civil War* . . . , especially Chapter VI which covers the period from December 13, 1862, to the fall of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863, a victory which — together with that at Gettysburg — marked the resurgence of confidence in the Union Army and among the Northern Unionists.

<sup>12</sup> Although Boyd lists 12 boats, with names for eleven, most accounts give anywhere from 13 to 15 as the number in this fleet. [Belknap], *History of the Fifteenth*

1st Platte Valley	7th Gate City
2d Jennie Deans	8th (Blank)
3d Marie Deming	9th Arago
4th Dilligent	10th Superior
5th Sunnyside	11th Madison City
6th Minnehaha	12th St Louis

These vessels kept at a distance of 200 to 400 yards apart as we glided down the stream. During the afternoon we did not see much except the wide waste of waters — for the River is high and occasionally a *sad looking plantation* on the Arkansas shore. Once in awhile we could see a hole in the woods with a cabin and a few small fields. At dark the fleet drew in toward the Arkansas shore behind a dense forest — and a few men went ashore to cook. Here we shall remain all night.

*Memphis to Vicksburg, Mississippi River*

Jan'y 21st We sailed at daylight and by 11 oclock we were at Helena Ark and stayed there *two* hours. The 33d 40th and 26th Iowa Regts were there. Also the 3d and 4th Cavalry and such shouting and cheering and shaking of hands I never saw. The guards could not keep the men on the boats. I saw no one I knew. Helena is a town of about 1000 inhabitants in ordinary times but now contains more "yanks" than natives. The town lies on both level and high ground. Back of the place are steep and rugged hills almost naked of timber while next to the River the ground is level and wet. It is fortified by a strong work near the centre of the town and by fortifications above and below.

Leaving Helena we kept on down the stream and followed the current

*Iowa* . . ., 238, gives 14 led by the Platte Valley; 15 is the number given by Lurton Dunham Ingersoll, *Iowa and the Rebellion* . . . (Philadelphia, 1866), 254; "C. E." wrote to the Muscatine *Weekly Journal* on Jan. 28, 1863, that the troops embarked on "thirteen transports"; his letter was published in the Feb. 6, 1863, issue. On Grant's orders, transports for 16,000 men were ordered to Memphis; an order which practically cleared the Mississippi and Ohio of boats except between Memphis and Vicksburg. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 556. See also Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:441-2. When the fleet reached Milliken's Bend, nearly opposite Vicksburg, more than 100 steamboats had gathered there, bringing Union troops south to the siege of Vicksburg. [Belknap], *History of the Fifteenth Iowa* . . ., 239. This was the beginning of the great move upon Vicksburg via the Mississippi. Grant had failed in his planned double-pronged attacks — Sherman from the Yazoo and Grant from the rear of Vicksburg. McClelland, who had for a time been given command of the Mississippi attack by Lincoln, and who had gone with Sherman to Arkansas Post on what Grant had at one time termed a "wild-goose chase," was now definitely subordinated to Grant in command. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 553, 555.

most of the time — sometimes on one side of the River and then to the other. Often followed the cut offs. This evening we are tied up on the Arkansas shore — and we cooked our supper on land. The scenery all day has been most monotonous. Saw 12 or 14 boats to-day going up and about all of them loaded with soldiers.

*Jany 22d* Weather clear and cool. We have been going at a good rate of speed all day and did not stop until dark when we tied up on the Mississippi shore. We saw some fine Plantations to-day and the scenery quite good. High levees on either side protect the adjacent lands from overflow. This morning we passed the mouth of White River in Ark where lie six gunboats. Saw the town of Napoleon at the mouth of the Ark. No inhabitants could be seen. The *stillness of death* rests on all this country. Company "G" was ordered on Picket this eve and we are posted about 400 yards out in the woods. Lieut Fisk is with us. These woods are sort of *owlish*.

*In sight of Vicksburgh Louisiana [sic]*

*Jany 23d* Had a little alarm on Picket last night. Some of the 95th Ills were on Picket also and they fired 4 shots. When the cause was investigated it was found that an innocent *Raccoon* had started the firing. At the signal for starting this morning (4 whistles) we came to the boat and were soon gliding down the current. About 3 o'clock this afternoon we tied up at the Louisiana shore and remained until dark.

The River to-day has been confined to its channel about all the way. It was from one mile to one and a half miles wide and has been very beautiful. Where we have landed is an old field full of Cockle burs high as a mans head and thick as they can grow. The long gray moss hangs in the timber and gives it a most sombre and mournful appearance. The limbs are covered and it hangs in beautiful streamers often three feet long. We are just above the "great fleet" at the turning of the elbow above Vicksburgh. Steamers line the west bank far as the eyes can reach. We are a little above the head of "Butlers Canal" which has been worked on some with the design of cutting Vicksburgh off from the River and making it an *inland* city. We are 14 miles from Vicksburgh by River and 7 miles by land as the "crow flies" <sup>13</sup>. Below us the River has cut through the levee and a vast body of

<sup>13</sup> Grant's problem was to get below Vicksburg. To run past the batteries was extremely hazardous, but was the final solution of the problem. Before that attempt was made, however, numerous efforts were made to by-pass Vicksburg by canals. One such canal was started by General Thomas Williams at Young's Point in 1862,



water is pouring through as large as the Des Moines River Details of men are at work trying to stop it We are in a most filthy and sickly condition from being on the boats so long. No hog-pen will compare

Jan'y 24th Weather wet and muddy The flat space between the River and the levee is knee deep in black mud. Then comes the levee which is about ten feet high and twenty feet wide at the base and this is all the dry ground we can find <sup>14</sup> Went out on a ramble down the River about two miles Saw many hospitals along the levee and there are thousands of sick men here. The levee for long distances is full of *new made graves* <sup>15</sup> This is a hard place for a sick man He must have plenty of *grit or die* The men on our boat sick are numbered by dozens, and few have the *small-pox* Far as I went the soldiers covered all the dry land and the boats were as thick as they could be packed They were unloading ammunition camp equipage wagons provisions as fast as it could be done in the mud

There was some heavy cannonading said to be the Rebel batteries on the Bluffs over at Vicksburg trying to shell our men who are at work on the "Canal" <sup>16</sup> There are rumors of fighting below The River raised ten inches to-day

Jan'y 25th Sunday. Weather warm and a little exercise would bring the but had failed. Another effort was now to be made to persuade the Mississippi to follow this canal, thus cutting off the peninsula before Vicksburg. "From Young's Point the Mississippi turns in a north-easterly direction to a point just above [Vicksburg], when it again turns and runs south-westerly. . . ." To cut the peninsula formed by this deep bend in the Mississippi, thus enabling vessels to avoid the batteries at Vicksburg, had, however, proved impossible, for the canal, running vertical to the Vicksburg batteries, was constantly exposed to their fire. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:446-7. Also see Adam Badeau, *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant* . . . (3 vols., New York, 1881), 1:163-6.

<sup>14</sup> "The winter of 1862-3 was a noted one for continuous high water in the Mississippi and for heavy rains along the lower river. To get dry land, or rather land above the water, to encamp the troops upon, took many miles of river front. We had to occupy the levees and the ground immediately behind. This was so limited that one corps, the 17th, under General McPherson [this included the 15th Iowa] was at Lake Providence, seventy miles above Vicksburg." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:444.

<sup>15</sup> "The camps were frequently submerged, and the diseases consequent to this exposure prevailed among the troops; dysenteries and fevers made sad havoc, and the small-pox even was introduced, but speedily controlled. The levees furnished the only dry land deep enough for graves, and for miles along the river bank this narrow strip was all that appeared above the water, furrowed in its whole length with graves. The troops were thus hemmed in by the burial-places of their comrades." Badeau, *Military History of U. S. Grant* . . ., 1:161.

<sup>16</sup> Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:445.



perspiration out freely Our boat moved a little up stream and we went ashore and into camp among a lot of Negro quarters which consisted of six frame houses double and a porch between. One Co takes a house In rear of the houses are some stables which are filled with forage The large and fine mansion belonging to the Plantation is occupied by the line officers We are as proud as plantation hands at our location We brought off the boat nothing but one days rations, and our Knapsacks and haversacks We had 4 cases of *small-pox* on board of the boat — two white men and two Negroes They were carried off the boat and put by themselves on the levee An attack from a fleet of Rebel Gun boats up the Yazoo river is expected at any time and we have orders to be ready to go aboard the boat at any time when called

*Digging on Butlers Canal Youngs Point La*

Jan'y 26th Had to detail 1 Sergt, 1 Corp and ten men to work on the "Canal" to-morrow The men do not relish the idea of having to dig Drew six days Rations The wind blows cool from the North We are very comfortable in our Barracks There is no *forage* here and we are dependent upon our "Uncle Sam" for our daily bread

Jan'y 27th Rained about all last night and to-day is cool We have in the Regt 12 cases of *small-pox* The men who were on the big *drunk* at Memphis are the bluest gang that I know They are hard to get along with and are *cussing* and finding fault with everyone Heavy details are at work on the "Canal" to-day Every one almost who has seen the work says it will be a failure. *Time will tell*

Jan'y 28th Last night was very cold and the ground was frozen hard this morning so that it would bear up a wagon. I was vaccinated<sup>17</sup> Had all our stuff taken off the boat A Captain Stafford of the 1st Kansas was instantly killed at the crevasse to-day by a large Cypress log rolling upon him

<sup>17</sup> "Against smallpox the Army had the mighty weapon, vaccination. Since almost seventy years had passed since Jenner conferred it upon a pox-ridden world, one might suppose that vaccination had become a commonplace. . . . But many of the laity still had doubts and a large part of the population had never been vaccinated. . . . Regulations required the vaccination of recruits, and revaccination 'when necessary.' The rule was followed closely enough to prevent large-scale infection, but neglect was sufficiently frequent to account for an annual average smallpox incidence of almost 5 per thousand. Vaccination was often neglected at the training camps maintained by the states, but the principal trouble seems to have been the general failure to appreciate need for revaccination, which had not been much practiced down to that time." George Worthington Adams, *Doctors in Blue: The Medical History of the Union Army in the Civil War* (New York, 1952), 219.

*Jany 29th* The wind has dried up the mud and the sun has come out warm The men are on duty so much now that it is hard to get them out Working in the "Canal" is no fun Men have to work knee deep in the mud and water The officers sleep until 8 oclock and do not appear to care whether school keeps or not The men are often hurried off to work in the morning before they can get their breakfast and this makes them ugly and insubordinate There is but little discipline and the details go off swearing that they will not do anything and thus things go I do not believe our commanders know what we are here for. But they will keep the men employed until they can *think up something*

A Rumor comes that Port Hudson has been taken by our forces.<sup>18</sup> It is another strong hold over 200 miles below here I hear that work on the Canal is to be stoped There was heavy cannonading down the River this morning said to be the Rebel batteries firing on some of our men who attempted to cross the river Congress has passed the "Conscription Act" Good Nineteen cases small-pox in the Regt now

*Jany 30th* Weather calm warm and clear McVey and I took a stroll down the River. Men are working on the levee or "Crevasse" but with no success in stoping the water which is about 12 Rods wide and ten feet deep Saw Jacob Stark Sutler 34th Iowa There must be more than 100 steam-boats here They line the shore for miles. Got a letter from Miss J. Keokuk. An old Negro lies in an old hut close to us and he suffers very much and must soon die Saw a lot of Contrabands just bro't in from the back country They say the Masters are running all the Negroes off to Texas to keep them out of the hands of the "Yankees"

*Looking at Vicksburgh from Louisiana*

*Jany 31* Cloudy and warm The 1st Brigade of our Div went up the River to-day. A scouting party from our Regt went into the back country *mounted on mules* We had orders to cut wood enough to-day to last over Sunday Strange order that

*Feb'y 1 Sunday:* Rain rain and mud Have spent the day reading and writing Went down to the steamer "Arago" and got my dinner Capt Hanks drew a lot of Clothing and had it distributed to-day . . .

<sup>18</sup> This was just another camp rumor. Port Hudson, the last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi, just above Baton Rouge, did not fall to Union forces until July 9, 1863, five days after the fall of Vicksburg. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XXIV, Part III, 499.

*Feb'y 2d* We were awakened by the noise of Cannon this morning which seemed to be but a short distance down the River. I have heard since that one of our rams ran the blockade and the Rebel Batteries did what they could to destroy the vessel<sup>19</sup> The Sutler who owned the goods at Memphis with which the boys were so free has followed us in hot haste and the rumor is that our Regt will be assessed \$5,000 [?] as our part to be paid This may prove to be the *dearest old spree* which we have had — and one in which the innocent will suffer with the *guilty*

*Feb'y 3d* Gloriously cold for this latitude I think the sunny South is imbibing some of the frigid breath of these Northern invaders . . .

*Feb'y 4th* This morning was cold and Jack frost made us draw up our feet in bed last night like ducks in a snow drift The rain has poured down incessantly all day and at times was mixed with sleet The men on the levee have a fearful time in the mud and water I have been reading about all day in a Book called *The Rivals or Times of Burr and Hamilton* Our reading matter we pick up in our *travels* We captured a fine library at the Clayton House in Holly Springs It is now a "circulating" library

*Feb'y 5th* Cold and extremely disagreeable with a high wind from the NW a few flakes of snow fell We have fared badly for two or three days having nothing but hard tack We to-day got \$6.70 of Company fund and we took it and bought a barrel of flour at the Commissary Out of it we got some fresh biscuit and also drew a little beef There is a cattle yard here and there are a lot of old skeletons in it which are called *beaves* [sic] It is supposed that the recent high wind blew down one of those old Texas steers and not being strong enough to get up again the Qr Master kindly *consented* to let us have the *remains* Any one who craves beef steak can be satisfied by just going down to that Corral and looking [at] those carcasses Newspapers in camp at 25 cts apiece. Work has been resumed on the "Canal" The Rebs have a 125 gun opposite the South end of the canal and cast a solid shot over now and then to keep the men awake

*Feb'y 6th* This has been a beautiful day clear and warm Drew five days Rations including 1 Brl flour Lieut Hedrick and I went down to the crevasse The men are getting the Water stoped to a small extent by putting

<sup>19</sup> This was the ram, *Queen of the West*, under command of Col. Charles Rivers Ellet. He ran the ram past Vicksburg in daylight, set the Confederate *City of Vicksburg* afire, then continued on down past Warrenton, capturing three other Confederate boats. *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XXIV, Part I, 336-9; Part III, 39.



brush and sand-bags in the break Saw five steamers come from the North and they all landed at Grants Headquarters Rumor says we will go up the River some distance From vaccination my left arm is very sore. Vicksburgh *defiant* and *proud* sits upon the hills across the stream and dares us to come over We can see her Court House and all her public buildings and even the teams that are hurrying along the streets Here we are on the opposite side of a great River whose broad waters have *never* been *bridged* by human hands. Jack Frost is the only contractor who has ever taken that contract and he only operates in his own territory and makes no contracts in the Southern Confederacy If he could operate here we could soon fix those fellows over there We have no friends upon that hostile shore and here *we are* in this unhealthy place squatting along the levee and looking like *geese* so far as hostile intentions are concerned

Feby 7th There has been an unusual stir among the fleet to-day and some cannonading down the River At 9 oclock this evening we had orders to be ready to move on Transports with *one* days Rations Geo Reece [Rees] of Co "B" died of small-pox to-day and was burried at once

*Tired looking at V. Mississippi River*

Feby 8th Sunday: Have been waiting and expecting to go on boat all day but did not until dusk when our Regt and the 16th went aboard the "Maria Deming" She is a large boat and was built for the Cotton trade She is double deck and has an immense amount of room Besides the two Regiments we have a Battery on board and then are not crowded The sick men of the Division are on the steamer "Lady Jackson" Dan Fisher is the only one from "G" The men were very late getting teams and wagons on Our destination is unknown to us

*Maria Deming Mississippi River*

Feby 9th At 11 o'clock we left shore Just before we got off a flood of contrabands came in from the back country They had horses and mules and all imaginable stuff from a feather bed to a grind stone Some of the mules they sold at \$2.00 per head and some they gave away Poor creatures these contrabands They fly for their freedom to the union army and we are not able to do much for them as it is all we can do to take care of ourselves The men in our camp treat them worse than *brutes* and when they come into camp cries of "Kill him" "drown him" &c are heard on every hand The prejudice against the race seems stronger than ever The Proclamation of the President has strengthened this feeling and at home the ene-



mies of the government and the Army are *defiant* and say the Negro shall "*not be free*" There are some *fools* in our Army who think it would be a disgrace to allow a colored man to dig a trench or help us fight against his *rebellious Master* I should like to see all such *idiots* put in the *front* and in the *ditches* If any African will stand between me and a rebel *bullet* he is *welcome* to the honor and the *bullet* too

Our fleet consists of the flag ship *Platte Valley*, *Empress*, *Louisiana*, *Arago*, *Maria Deming*, *Edward Walsh*, *Luzerne* and a gun boat The Commissary boat *City of Madison* is also along We are going up stream

*Camp at Lake Providence Louisiana*

*Feb'y 10th* At break of day I was up and after having washed my face and taken breakfast in the cabin I went out and found that we were tied to the west shore and near a town Church spires ran up through the China trees and pointed heavenward Going up the levee I saw a lot of contrabands at work digging a great ditch or canal from the River out through the levee and they said it was to turn the water into a Lake and the Lake entered Tensas bayou which ran into Red River It is thought that a passage can be cut through for the passage of boats and we can thus *flank* Vicksburgh and land a fleet below the City<sup>20</sup>

This town is called Lake Providence The 1st Brigade landed here one week ago and have thoroughly occupied the place The "Provosts" came down to near where I was with "lightning rods" up and I passed around to their rear Saw a man whom I took to be a Chaplain (because I did not hear him swear) talking to a lot of Negroes. He advised them to remain with their Masters as long as possible as we could not take care of their families The Negroes did not seem to like the advice. I visited the Cemetery here and saw some very old graves dating back to the beginning of the century Some of the graves were beautifully decorated Coming back I saw a singular plant called the "Spanish Dagger" with great leaves defended by great thorns. It is used for *hedges*

<sup>20</sup> "On the 30th of January [1863] . . . I ordered General McPherson, stationed with his corps at Lake Providence, to cut the levee at that point. If successful in opening a channel for navigation by this route, it would carry us to the Mississippi River through the mouth of the Red River, just above Port Hudson and four hundred miles below Vicksburg by the river. Lake Providence is a part of the old bed of the Mississippi, about a mile from the present channel. It is six miles long and has its outlet through Bayou Baxter, Bayou Macon, and the Tensas, Washita and Red Rivers. . . ." Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1:447-8. This was another of the canal-building schemes to get around Vicksburg which would also fail.

Our boat got up steam and we went up stream about one mile and a half. Here we landed and marched out from the River one and one half miles and stacked arms in a field and close to a row of Negro houses. All the way to the river is one vast field white with the ungathered cotton. This plantation had 100 field hands. But the owner has fled and taken all the able bodied and young Negroes with him leaving all the old and infirm to take care of themselves. The owner is a Genl Sparrow who is now a Confederate Congressman <sup>21</sup> and is said to be very wealthy. His Residence stands on the North shore of the Lake and is surrounded by all that art and labor can do to make it a Paradise. The Lake in front is about one mile wide and extends several miles to the westward — is deep and clear and has been the resort of Visitors from all sections.

Saw one old Negro whose name is "Ephraim" and says he is over 90 years old and he does not look a day younger. His head is white and he is only able to see a little. His hands and fingers are hard as bone and all out of shape with unrequited toil and almost [a] century of *servitude*. Another old Negro named "Peter" said he was 78 years old. They were born in Va and came to this Plantation in 1825 they said. We asked old "Ephraim" why his Master ran away. He said Well sah I spose he thought it better to run away den to make a bad "stan" sah.

With these old people were a few small Negro children from two years old up to six or seven years. There was no money in these poor old worn out slaves and the cruel and barbarous master had abandoned them to their fate. As I looked at their worn out hands and fingers and bodies I thought of the long cruel years of bondage while under burning suns and in cold and heat they had labored for this *hellish* system of human slavery and now in the close of nearly a century they were only a few hours from absolute want and the misery of hunger. This Plantation has plenty of forage and food but a few days will clean it all up. We found bushels of yams and Potatoes (sweet). Genl Sparrow owned 500 Negroes.

Among a band of contrabands that came in to-day was a bright little girl whose hair hung to her shoulders and was just a little *wavy*. Her features were not like a Negro but were sharp and clear while her eye was *dark blue* and yet she was a *slave*. Her mother was along and looked a little like she had African blood. She said this was her little girl and that she had two

<sup>21</sup> Edward Sparrow was a member of the Senate of the Confederate States of America.

more daughters grown up and the *father* of all three was her *Master* who classed them all as his *slaves* A soldier who stood by and heard the Mother tell this story exclaimed in the fervent patriotism of his feelings *By G—d I'll fight till hell freezes over and then I'll cut the ice and fight on*

This morning a foraging party went from 1st Brigade and were ambuscaded by the enemy. At the first fire six of our men were killed and several wounded The first Kansas went out to reenforce them and succeeded in capturing 19 prisoners and cleaning them out generally.

Officers are in houses and the men in tents here Gray took a door off the Overseers house and was going to make a *bunk* of it to lie upon But Col Reid saw him and rode down to him on a gallop and asked him what he did that for Gray told him when the Col drew out his *sword* and told Gray to drop the door Gray did not drop the door but he threw it about a Rod and at the same time said take your d——d door The Valliant officer then sheathed his *bloodless* weapon and rode off Gray says he will cause him to have *night sweats* for that

*Feby 11th* Weather warm and spring like A few Peach and plum trees are coming out in *bloom* Have been mending my clothes to-day Two of the good young ladies of Indianola gave me what is called a "housewife" apiece before I left home. I kept one and gave the other away Never came anything so handy It contains needles, pins, buttons, thread and just what every soldier needs In it the needles do not rust and are always in good shape — to say nothing about the foresight and kindness of the givers. "God bless them" Attended a funeral in the 95th Ills to-day The music was the *best* I have ever heard The Chaplain spoke a few words and offered a prayer Visited a gunboat on the River She was mounted with eight Dahlgren guns — A gunboat is a nice clean place inside and the men in the Navy do not have such a *dirty* time as we

*Feby 12th* Last night there was a terrible rain which came in fitful dashes and showers The water stood in about all the tents this morning. Some of the men lay in three inches of water and would not have got up then had it not been for Roll Call. Company all on Picket except 1 Sergt and myself and three sick men Lieut Fisk was Officer of the Day He was strict. Men out without Passes were gobbled. A number of soldiers out on the Lake on Rafts and on the Island killing hogs were captured and the Rafts taken and the *Rafters* arrested Altogether the Naval captures consists of 4 Rafts and one *Horse trough* The island is a large farm and the owner came over



to-day to ask protection against the invading "Yankees" who he said were killing all his stock and also that he had *five daughters* that he feared would be *insulted*. He could have reached Genl McArthur's head quarters in fifteen minutes by rowing but the Pickets would not let him through so he went around by land in a Buggy. The Negroes are bringing in wagon loads of sweet potatoes from the rich back country. We traded 1 brl flour in town for 166 loaves of bread which just suits us.

*Feb'y 13th* Weather warm and clear. A foraging party went from our Regt to-day — out about 4 miles. They brought in two wagon loads of sweet potatoes. The guards are so strict now that we cannot get out to hunt our own forage. Even Gray has about given up. Only three Passes allowed per day to the Company.

*Feb'y 14th* More rain last night and to-day is foggy. I took Sergt Dan Embree's place and went with a squad of 28 men to work on the *ditch*. But it was so wet that we could not work in the forenoon and we run around until 12 o'clock. Saw the Marie Deming. She had just come in from a little trip fourteen miles below. She had on board 400 "Contrabands" taken off three or four Plantations. They were so thick on the boat that they looked like a mass of Angle worms working. Big little old and young all shrieking for *liberty*. They had fled with about everything that was of *no value*. Old chests, trunks, and beds (a Negro never forgets his bed) coops of chickens and ducks and geese and pet pigs and all breeds of dogs. Added to the darkies and all their plunder were 150 mules and horses. The men are to be set to work in the ditch and the women and children to picking cotton. A large force is working on the canal and we are almost through the levee when the River will flood all the back country on the Louisiana side. A good many think we are only working here to cover some of the *cotton thieves* and it is not intended to make a passage here. Cotton speculators follow the army like vultures follow a caravan. Cotton here 20 to 30c — in New York \$1.00 to \$1.10 per lb.

*Feb'y 15th Sunday:* Had a terrible thunder storm last night and the ground is deluged again. This morning 20 men went foraging from Co "G" and they brought in 20 bales of Cotton. It was found five miles from here *under* some cotton seed. Have not been outside of guard lines to-day — but have spent the day reading and writing. We now have *five months* pay due. Men with families at home are much discouraged and I am not far from the *truth* when I say that there are *hundreds* here that would *desert* if they had



this pay Discouragements are thick and heavy upon all this army Men high in power are utterly reckless of their duty. We are having a poor Policy of carrying on the War or a poor way of executing a good Policy As it is I can but hope and pray that at least one *more year* will end the barbarous struggle

The march and desolation caused by two millions of armed men is laying waste the land Kentucky Missouri and Virginia are being trampled under the feet of the two contending armies and which must ruin them almost beyond recovery President Lincoln has called for the arming of 300,000 colored This has stired the boiling cauldron of *treason* to the very bottom The South now threatens to raise the *black flag* and exterminate every black man found with arms. They may for a time not remember that their own *sweet* lives may go the same way. Our flag will be just as *black* as theirs if we get the 300,000

*Feby 16th* Ponchos and high boots are in great demand The rain poured down all last night The hog pens in Iowa do not get in a worse condition than our camp ground Guns ammunition and uniforms are in sad plight Dan built a chimney to-day for our tent but he made one great mistake — he got the wrong end on the ground and it smokes us out

One year ago such times as these would have made us all sick. But we are pretty tough and are not much affected by such small matters When we landed at Pittsburgh we knew nothing about soldiering We could not cook and we could not eat. Hard bread and "*sow belly*" we could not *stomach* Now we can digest all we can get. Never shall we forget the gloomy days and nights between the Landing and Corinth How we lay out upon the damp ground and could not help ourselves from weakness. Nine tenths of us were sick and we had to be in line of battle almost all the time We did not know how to fix our tents and how easy it was to make bunks out of little round poles such as we found everywhere and to sleep off the ground The experiences of those days learned us much We can now in two hours after we stack arms have up tents or even build houses and have up good dry bunks ready to sleep The soldier can cut 4 stakes and drive [them] into the ground take two short pieces — one at the head and one at the foot and lay down small poles wide enough to [sleep] one or two men At his head he stands his gun and cartridge box where he can reach them in the dark. On a stick having several prongs driven into the ground near his head he can hang his canteen haversack and the last thing he takes off

when he goes to bed — his cap will take the highest prong In case of a night *alarm* he can put his hand on all his fixtures He puts his pants and vest under his head for a pillow if not expecting an alarm and if he does expect trouble he sleeps with these on and also his boots or shoes Two flat rails with one end laid up on the *third* rail of a fence and the other end sloping out on the ground makes a good bed for a tired soldier and one which will *rest* him quicker than a feather bed The moss of the trees is much used but moulds with a little use

A soldier in the field should never lie down in his tent until he has dug a little trench around it to carry off the water If he wants a small writing desk he can drive a stake near his bunk and with three or four nails fasten a board on top and sit on his bunk and write to the “girl he left behind him” The men should bunk together in pairs then the two sets of blankets will make them comfortable Companies should be divided into Messes and one man cook for each Mess and be excused from camp duties One man can cook for about fifteen persons. Meals in camp should be regular and three each day

Tents in this army are of three kinds Sibley or bell tents, Wall and Wedge tents For enlisted men the Sibley is the best of all others Is conical in shape and runs up to a peak and will accommodate ten to fifteen men with their bunks. In cold weather a little chimney built up in the center three or four feet high will carry the smoke up and warm the tent In warm weather the centre pole can be raised and a curb put around the bottom and the tent fastened to it which makes more room and gives all the Ventillation wanted Wall tents are mostly used by the Officers and have an extra roof or fly attached The tent is square The Wedge tent is hot and uncomfortable in warm weather and is a nuisance at any time A soldier should bathe often and change his clothes at least once a week so far as underclothing is concerned to keep Vermin from accumulating I have seen men literally wear out their underclothes without a change and when they threw them off they would swarm with Vermin like a live *Ant hill* when disturbed No soldier should ever complain of any detail upon which he has been called and should be *ready* at the call of the *drum* at all times looking *neat* and *clean* as possible More men are promoted for their taste and personal neatness than from any other *meritorious* conduct — however *unjust* this may sometimes be it is nevertheless *true* The private soldier or enlisted man is given to some strategy in the way of getting his things transported on a march

He will hide his blankets in the roll of his tent and smuggle all the stuff through he can

Whiskey and sexual vices carry more soldiers off than the *bullet* More men *die* of homesickness than all other diseases — and when a man gives up and lies down he is a *goner* Keep the mind occupied with something new and keep *going all the time* except when asleep

*Feb 17th* The rain never ceased all last night and has not suspended to-day Traded 1 brl flour for 160# Bread We can scarcely get our cooking done it is so wet. The mud from here to the River is about 3 feet deep

*Feb 18th* The rain has at last ceased We never had such a muddy camp Lieut Fisk is sick and off duty McVey and I took a stroll down the Lake and he knocked over a wild duck and caught it

*Feb 19th* This morning the sun came out warm and the wind blew from the southwest drying up all the surface of the *mud*, and giving us a chance to dry our clothes Everybody seems to feel better and the boys are pitching horse shoes and playing ball I had a Pass and went down town and came back through the residence grounds of Ex Planter Genl Sparrow It is an elegant place and the evergreens are full of birds singing *Merrily* Several hundred Negroes are working on the Canal and about forty picking Cotton A man named Kellogg from Memphis has charge of the cotton business and is fitting up a large Gin house here and will bale the cotton fast as it comes in.

*Feb 20th* Weather fine and clear Sergts Thatcher, Myers, and Jeff Hockett and I got Passes and went sailing on the Lake. We went across and called at several houses and in one deserted by the white folks we found some Negroes and a good *Piano* which had been left On the mantel piece was the *remains* of two Pictures each of *Massa* and *Missus* painted on canvas The *inevitable invaders* had been here The *culled pussons* said the soldiers had damaged them about *thusly* “*Massas*” *head* had been cut off and taken away and “*Missus*” was terribly soiled and cut. They said the soldiers had been there “*jus cussin and swarin all de time*”

Near here I found a family burying ground One very neat Monument was marked with a wreath enclosing the letters “US” and described “Here sleeps Major Felix Bosworth U. S. A. died Vera Cruz, June 9th 1847, Aged 38 yrs” Another — “William Lester son of Felix and Elizabeth Bosworth who died January 5th 1838. Aged 2 years and 4 months.”



"He was the pride of his bereaved parents  
 The darling of his doting Grandmother  
 Pre-eminence was in him early shown  
 Heaven had marked thee for its own"

"Little Charley son of Felix and E. S. Bosworth died May 24th 1840. Aged 4 months"

"E're sin could blight or sorrow fade  
 Death came with friendly care  
 The opening bud to heaven conveyed  
 And bade it blossom there"

The burying grounds of the people here are generally 10 to 15 Rods from their dwellings and are fitted up with the most scrupulous care

Going across bayou Tensas we found our way to a fine brick house on the banks of the stream After showing our Passes to the guard we went to the door and knocked A lady about 40 years of age opened the door and invited us in and going [in] we were shown into a beautiful Parlor which contained a Piano—a bed and a fine sofa The lady made us be seated and entertained us quite freely We called for some music but she said no one in the house could play as her daughter was not at home She said she had two sons in the Southern army and she said she thought they were *right* Was glad our officers had placed guards around her house to protect her from the soldiers Her name she said was Smith and said she was a sister of Tucker of Miss and wished to know if "old Scott" held any public trust (Meaning Genl Winfield Scott) Saw a good looking girl come in just as we left As we came back to camp landed a few minutes at the Island—ate dinner—went over to the cotton gin then back to the Lake and across back again to camp—to Dress Parade and to bed

*Feby 21st* We are almost drowned out by the constant rain which keeps falling. Drew 7 days Rations.

*Feby 22d Sunday:* Weather clear and warm Got a Pass and took a long walk down the Lake. . . .

*Feby 23d* Weather beautiful Some days ago Genl Grant issued an order against "*Card playing* and gambling" and since that time the men have taken to horse shoes and ball for amusement General Logans Division came down to-day and have landed on the south side of the Lake A heavy detail is moving the little steamer "Delia" from the River into the Lake Lieut



Fisk and I took a ride on the Lake and visited the Island Some men came near shooting us from the opposite side while firing at water fowl

*Feby 24th* Weather calm clear nice and warm This morning I wrote a long letter to Col G W Clark but from a matter of policy did not send it off A mail to-day brought me no letters

The Peace party at the North are making desperate efforts to bring the war to a close *any how* whether honorable or not They seem to care for no one but Jeff Davis and his side and want to know that they shall lose nothing The Conscript Bill has passed Congress There are signs of French mediation in favor of Peace But no healthy indications in favor of Peace that will be lasting More blood must be shed and thousands fall before peace can come None but the patriotic soldier can feel the impress of the tory influence at home We who have suffered the hardships and endured the fatigues and sufferings of the past two years of bloody toil can feel the *sting* of these traitors at home Peace we desire above all things but when Peace is declared let it be one that shall *endure* and the consequences of which shall never again bring us into the field

This afternoon ten or twelve houses burned down in town Some of the boys were down there at the time and while trying to save some property for a widow woman found a large "Rebel flag" The brick Church was also burned This afternoon the 11th and 13th went up the River By a Newspaper I see that Genl Sparrow upon whose Plantation we are homesteading is in the Confederate Senate at Richmond He had better be here looking after his *rails*—they are going very fast and soon the demand will be greater than the supply

*Feby 25th* Raining again this evening 21 men on guard to-day and some of them guarding Col Reids "fleet" of *Horse troughs* The boys sail around the Lake and pick off "peocusses" one of Sergt Grays Mexican names for graybacks

*Feby 26th* The rain came down in torrents last night and *five* inches of water fell Henry Metz and I took a sail on the Lake to-day and came near upsetting The Lake is rising rapidly Made out Muster Rolls to-day

*Feby 27th* Weather warm and cloudy Have been busy all day making out Reports Eleven Commissions came to day for men in the Regt. Four Captains viz: Capt [James S.] Porter Co "D" Capt [Christian] Landstrum Co "B" Capt [Edgar T.] Miller Co "C" Capt [Newton J.] Rodgers [Rogers] Co "E" The Lieuts are [Ensign H.] King Co "I" and Fitzpatrick

same Co [George W.] Buchanan and [Emanuel M.] Gephart [Gebhart] Co "D" [John C.] Brush Co "B" [Sylvester] Rhiniason [Rynearson] Co "C" [William P. L.] Muir Co "E" There was great good feeling among the new Officers<sup>22</sup>

*Feb'y 28th* Weather clear warm and fine. Had muster at 3 oclock Present 50 men — 7 absent sick and 3 Parolled and same as prisoners Had to make out monthly Report to Adj't Gen'l Iowa and a large Bill of Clothing wanted We Muster every two months and at the end of that time there are a large number of Reports to make out and I make them

*March 1st Sunday:* A beautiful day Had Company Inspection at 10 oclock The Col went around and examined the clothing of a great many of the men and says he is going to make us all have a new suit "out and out" Our Clothes were never in so bad a condition as the present. Some of the men are barefooted and some have no pants and travel around camp with nothing on but their drawers and shirts But they are the fellows who would be in that condition *anyway* if they drew a suit each month

To day we had a large mail which brought me several letters and one from Co[l] Geo W Clark saying he had "recomended" me for 1st Lieut in his Regiment and that the Commission would be on soon. This to me is good news

The boys are having some *rare* sport these nights shelling Col Reids house Co "H" seems to lead the charge They hunt up a good supply of *brick bats* during the day and hide them in their tents and when the quiet shades of night have settled down on friend and foe and camp and field while the fog is so thick that it can be cut with a *hay knife* they venture out by platoons [sic] and hurl a shower of bats toward the dim flickering light which comes from a window of the Col sleeping room The misiles against the frame building make the boards rattle like a great *hail storm* The Col springs out of bed and orders the guard at the door to *shoot* the first man he sees *at large* Before this time the firing party are snugly in bed and snoring away in innocence and so the poor guard himself in danger fails to find these *wicked men*<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Names corrected as found in *Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers* . . . (6 vols., Des Moines, 1908), 2:897-1055 *passim*. Only name not found in this official listing of Iowa soldiers was that of "Fitzgerald" of Co. "I".

<sup>23</sup> This is an example of the almost complete lack of discipline among the "citizen soldiers" of the army. Such actions were not peculiar to the 15th Iowa by any means. Henry Steel Commager, *The Blue and the Gray* . . . (2 vols., Indianapolis,

I think Sergt Gray and a few others in Company "C" are members of this *midnight brigade* but of course it is not my interest to *prove* it Last night the camp guards were doubled and men posted through camp to watch and *arrest* any man found out of his tent after 9 o'clock The inky darkness made it very difficult to see any one over five or six feet Along in the "wee sma" hours of the night a terrible *bombardment* commenced on the Col's house from the direction of Co "H" From some inscrutable reason Sergt Gray was up in that direction and the guards pursued him and with bayonets fixed yelled on him to *halt halt* Gray did not obey and with the guards close upon him he dodged into and out of several tents and as bad luck would follow Gray fell into one of the *kitchen slop holes* going about waist deep in the slush But he made one more heroic effort and got out — then he ran through a tent in Co "I" and emerged on the dark side leaving the guard *smelling* for him at "I" while he reached his own *bunk* in safety and was snoring away in two short *seconds* There was intervals of heavy *firing* all night but no one was found who knew any thing about it Almost any man with two pennyweights of horse sense can in this state of affairs *trace* from *cause* to *effect* Major Belknaps tent or house is never *shelled* and any man in the Regt who would do him any injury would soon be exposed and that without Belknaps help He is the only field officer we ever knew who is worth the clothes he wears

*March 2d* Weather clear and fine Took a ride to the oposite [sic] side of the Lake Saw two good looking and neatly dressed young ladies who are just from Kentucky having been [in] attendance at School and have now come down here to see what has become of their Plantation (said to belong

1950), 481ff, analyzes this attitude: "Americans have never taken kindly to discipline, either in peace or in war. . . . There was no military tradition in America, and little understanding of the value of rules and of discipline. This was the first major war in which Americans had ever been engaged, and it was the first to levy on the whole population. . . . There was, for example, no trained officer class, and neither government did anything effective either to use such material as was available or to train officers. . . . Most of the field and many of the general officers were appointed by state governors, usually on political grounds; a great many of these, especially in the North, earned their appointments by raising their own regiments or companies. Lower officers were customarily elected by the rank and file. . . . One result of this situation was widespread insubordination, downright disobedience, and a staggering high rate of desertion. It was not that the typical American was either disorderly or disobedient; it was rather that while willing enough to fight, he saw no reason for observing discipline when there was no fighting at hand. He had little respect for officers, as such, and many of these were not deserving of respect. . . ."



to them) They find the Plantation *here* but nearly all the attachments gone The Plantation is deserted by their kindred and the white tents of the invaders spread over the land Blue uniforms dot the sacred heritage and the "Stars and Stripes" float over the buildings . . .

This afternoon our long expected clothing arrived and in accordance with an order issued by the Col we are all obliged to have a uniform dress coat pants and cap Nearly all the men drew full suits I drew \$13.49 worth We are allowed \$42.00 for clothing the present year Last year we were allowed \$46.00 The Regt presented a fine appearance this evening on Dress Parade The men were clean and tidy and the dark coats and sky blue pants looked in fine contrast Some of the men had hats and some caps The Col said they must all have *caps* to-morrow to appear on Inspection An order was also read meant for the punishment of men who set fire to buildings Grist Mills &c by orders of Genl McPherson Wrote a letter to Col Clark to-day

*March 3d* Weather cool windy and clear At 2 oclock we had Regimental Inspection and we with all our marching and fighting accoutrements stood in line until 5 oclock The Col inspected us minutely A few men had not caps and new Dress coats and he informed them that he would not *tolerate hats* and *old coats* on Parade New ones had to be drawn and that *forthwith*

Here we are in the *field* and have nothing but *hard work* and *hard fighting* before us and here in the mud and water and these men with a *passable* coat are compelled to go to the expense of a new one Some of them have wives and little ones at home who depend upon the pitible [*sic*] sum of \$13.00 per month from the absent father to keep them from starvation and want while this *cornstalk* Colonel for his own glory and name can thus grab from these little ones.

Warm weather is upon us and the first trip we make all useless trappings will be cast away by the weary and thirsty soldiers Some of the officers got a severe talking to because they allowed the men to come on Parade with hats on Rumor says that *furloughs* are to be granted to *Meritorious* men I suspect it should read *Notorious* men — as they are the ones that generally get favors

*March 4th* Cool windy and chilly Had Company Inspection this afternoon and threw away our old cartridges and drew new *ones* and then we cleaned up our guns — our parade grounds and moved our tents and ventil-



lated things generally. Also drew three "Wedge" tents I *borrowed* a Pass and went down on the Sparrow Plantation on the bank of the Lake near Genl Crockers Hd quarters The little steamer "Delia" came over and had quite a gay party aboard Genl Logan, Gen Crocker, Col Chambers, and a number of ladies among the latter the *two* Kentucky girls Rumor says Vicksburgh has been evacuated

*March 5th* Weather cloudy. *Another* Inspection this afternoon Col Reid *tried* to drill us some and undertook to form Platoons Some Companies were larger than others and when wheeled into line again some Companies gained and some lost ground on account of not being equalized Reid did not know what was the matter nor what "*ailed* Hannah" until some one told him We awaited the arrival of the Inspecting officer — who was a Major He looked at our arms and many of the Knapsacks In Co "A" he found one fellow with an old *dirty shirt* in his Knapsack and he took it up between his thumb and one *finger* and made a few *pointed* remarks about it to the owner This Major could beat any man handling a gun whom I have ever seen

Co Books were examined and when done said we had passed "*bully*" Have orders this evening to sign Pay Rolls for September and October last We have had tough fare for some time. Nothing but bread and coffee, and some of the men are getting their *backs up* One fellow last night came to the door of his *tent* and shouted at the top of his voice *More Sow-belly and less style* The cry was taken up and passed all around and along the line The more the officers tried to stop the cry the more it *cried* and it is the "Password" now Perhaps years from now when looking back over these days I may remember the fearful significance of that *Midnight howl* — M-O-R-E S-O-W-B-E-L-L-Y A-N-D L-E-S-S S-T-Y-L-E Reid says this *howling* shall be *stoped* There seems to be only one way to *stop* it and that is to furnish the *Sow-belly*

*March 6th* Some of the Regiments are drilling to-day Was down at the River. Saw about one dozen Steamboats at the bank Saw the gun boat "Tyler" that helped save us at "Shiloh" She now has 9 guns. Immense piles of cotton lies upon the bank The Qr Master of the 17 A C has a large number of Negroes at work on all the surrounding Plantations picking cotton He pays them 1c per lb and *boards* them There has been 100 bales of cotton gathered on the Sparrow plantation. Mr. Sparrow had better be here looking after his cotton instead of preaching *treason* at Richmond The

cotton on the Sparrow place is said to be worth \$50,000  $\frac{1}{2}$  of this is said to go to the govt and the other  $\frac{1}{2}$  to the contractor

After Dress parade Col Reid formed the Regt into divisions and then he mounted the porch of one of the Negro quarters and read several Resolutions which he said had been adopted at a meeting of the Brigade officers at Genl Crockers Headquarters After they had been read a vote of the Regiment was called for About one half of the men voted *Yea* about one fourth *Nay* and the bal did not vote at all. When the *nays* had voted the Col asked them to step out to the *front* and 28 men did so. Many of the *nays* not knowing what was up did not come to the *front* When they had formed in two ranks the bal of the Regt marched *away* to quarters. Some of Co "E" groaned as they passed the brave 28 who were marched to the adjutants tent where also about all the Regiment *assembled* and there was more excitement than I have ever seen in the 15th Regt

The Col then with one of his peculiar *hyena grins* asked the 28 some questions — at the same time the Adjt took the names of the 28 Hedrick was acting Adjutant Some of the men said they were dissatisfied with one of the Resolutions which favored the "Proclamation of Emancipation" Some thought themselves better than a "nigger" Finally the 28 commenced to *catechize* the Col and soon got the *bulge* on him and he began to be *tired* of his *elephant* and not knowing how to *escape* out of his foolish predicament Lieut Col Belknap now came to the *rescue* (as he always had to when trouble came) and raising his voice above the din proposed "*three* cheers for the Union" This word *fitly* spoken touched a chord of attachment and every man joined in with a *will* with three long cheers, and wound up with a great *Cheer for Belknap* This ended the affair which otherwise might have ended in a most disagreeable manner Most of the *Nay* men were from Co "H"

*March 7th* Weather warm and fine Last night we had a hard storm of wind and rain Our tent came near going away. Dan and I got out and drove stakes and held her down But we got well drenched A forage train went out to-day but found nothing but fodder The Rebs have captured the "Queen of the West" the best gun boat we had Troops are going through Yazoo Pass on opposite side of the River and we shall probably go soon <sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> The canals at Vicksburg and Lake Providence both having proved failures, Grant here turns to another effort to reach Vicksburg. The Yazoo River, which en-

*March 8th Sunday* We had a terrible storm of wind, thunder, lightning and hail about 5 oclock this evening The wind blew a hurricane and drove the rain right through our tents At 10 oclock we had Reg Inspection Reid inspected guns Knapsacks &c He is one of the [illegible] . . .<sup>25</sup> Lieut Evans Co "A" was officer of the guard yesterday and last night Col Reid went to the Guard house and found the Lieut *asleep* and all the men The Col brought away *two guns* with him and to-day sent the Lieut under arrest and took his sword from him News to-day that our men have taken Yazoo City and 9 Rebel transports Have been reading to-day a book called "External Evidences of the Bible"

*March 9th* Weather cool and cloudy On dress Parade this evening in 13th I saw a man marched up and down in front of the Regiment with a guard on either side of him and on his back he carried a board with the word "*Thief*" The board was painted black and the letters white The music played was the "Rogues March" The victim was tall and slender and did not seem to be more than 19 years old His offence was stealing \$48.00 from a comrade. He will be marched in front of the Regiment several evenings in succession. All the men seemed to feel sorry for the unfortunate fellow By the decisions of a "Court Martial" here several men have been sentenced to hard labor in Penitentiary at Alton Ills for the term of their enlistment Two men were jerked out of the ranks in our Regt this evening because they came on Parade with their pants in their boots and one of them had a scotch cap on Grave offense that "Hugh T" One man in the 11th Iowa for *cussing* the name of the President of the United States and calling him a G-d s-n of a B—h and a black abolitionist and said [if] he had the power he would *shoot* him — has now to carry a 20 lb ball

ters the Mississippi just above Vicksburg, follows a northerly course parallel to the Mississippi, changing its name from Yazoo to Tallahatchie to Coldwater, at its various forks, until it reaches the vicinity of Helena, Ark. There it is connected with the Mississippi by a "narrow and tortuous bayou," known as Yazoo Pass. The Union forces hoped to get boats through this pass, and thus down the Coldwater-Tallahatchie-Yazoo to the rear of Vicksburg. McPherson's 17th Army Corps had been ordered to this area, but lack of transportation kept him from joining the expedition, which began on February 24, and ended in failure on April 8, 1863. Badeau, *Military History of U. S. Grant* . . ., 1:168ff; *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XXIV, Part I, 371-421.

<sup>25</sup> Here words evidently failed Boyd, and he indulges in a series of garbling wording resembling — on paper — modern double-talk. There seems to be some system to the lettering, so possibly it may have been some sort of private code which he and Dan Embree understood. From Boyd's previous comments on Col. Reid, no doubt what he has to say here was scurrilous in the extreme.



2 hours per day One Sergt in 10th Ohio Battery for getting drunk on guard was reduced to the Ranks and made to wear a ball and chain 30 days

*March 10th* More rain fell last night Drew five days Rations Sugar was saturated with oil so that we could not use it. Somebody *shelled* Col Reids quarters last night and *made* it quite lively for the old gentleman It was no doubt some of the *Nays* The Free Masons held a meeting last night. Most of the Officers belong Tim Ridlen received his discharge Papers last night He has not been fit for duty since he was shot in the left arm at Corinth last October . . .

*March 12th* Weather beautiful and clear This morning Col Reid came to my tent and with one of his *grins* beckoned me out He then showed me a "Commission" which he said had come for me for an office in the 34th Regiment He said he had already *forwarded* my name for a Commission in my own company and supposed I would not want to *leave* The Commission dates to March 1st as 1st Lieut Co "B" 34th Iowa Vol Infy The Col wanted me to come to his quarters this evening and let him know what I intended to do. So at dark I went over and told him I should go the first opportunity and that he *once* could have given me a Commission but seen fit not to do so He smiled a kind of *Aligator smile* and I bid him an *Aligator adieu* I believe about every officer in the Regiment has congratulated me on my success in *flanking Hugh J* They say I have served him right for the way he has used me Will start for Benton Barracks Mo in few days to join 34th Regt About all of Co "H" are in the Guard house to-night and those not in are *shelling* the Col Headquarters and the Guard house

*March 13th* Weather fine clear and warm Rec'd Sept and Oct pay to-day The men were glad to get even that much but would rather have more. A part of Co "H" men were escorted by Lightning rods to the Paymasters None of them refused their pay on that account I believe

*Farewell to Co "G" Lake Providence La*

*March 14th* I have [been] very busy all day getting ready for departure I went to Major Clarke of Genl McPhersons staff to obtain an order for transportation Sergt Sheffield and [I] got into a skiff [and] with two good sailors we started with sail up across the Lake The wind blew very hard and we had a tempestuous voyage of three miles down the Lake With the aid of Col Belknap (who is acting Provost Marshal for this Corps) we obtained an order on the Chief Quarter Master of the 17th A. C. for transportation to Memphis



This afternoon I spent settling up my business and at sundown bid farewell to Co "G" Depressed as I may have felt at bidding good bye to friends at Home when leaving for the War there never was a *sadder* moment in my short life or in all my experience than when I said "*good-bye*" to those *faithful boys* with whom for 19 long months of suffering of trials and common misfortunes — amid hunger privations and scenes of peril and death we had stood together as one man. How often they had divided with me their meager fare and little comforts I had been Orderly Sergt from the 1st day of organization down to the present time Seldom an hour or day when I did not know where every one of them was — whether sick or well, absent or present. At all the Roll Calls by day or by night their faces were before me like a picture on the wall I know most of their little troubles and trials in the Army and at home and often gave them a word of advise or sympathy and too often stood between them and *higher* authority in matters concerning their welfare As I took them by the hand and felt that electric thrill of sympathy which comes from a *true* heart I could not but realize that I should rather be a non-commissioned officer with such *friends* than be at the head of any Regiment *without them*

Surgeon Gibbon ordered an ambulance to take me with my trunk to the Landing Sergt Dan Embree came down and helped [me] on board the "City of Madison" If Justice is done Dan Embree he will get the Commission which Reid said should be mine if I consented to remain <sup>26</sup> Next to myself I should rather see Dan get a Commission than any other man who lives True faithful and honest he never shirked a duty . . .

About 9 oclock several steamers came from below. Sheffield who has likewise just received a Commission in 9th Cavalry is a Sergt in Co "D" where by Reids persistent meanness he tried to keep him But like my own case he *failed* We went aboard the steamer "Spread Eagle" and took a comfortable state Room Not however until two or three military officers had examined our Papers and pronounced them O K As I go upon deck and cast one farewell look at the shore I can see hundreds of Camp fires burning brightly through all the surrounding country and I instinctively ask myself if the *Roll has been called*

Good-night

Cyrus F. Boyd

<sup>26</sup> Dan Embree was commissioned second lieutenant, March 7, 1863, and first lieutenant Aug. 27, 1864. *Roster Iowa Soldiers*, 2:936.

## HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

### *The State Historical Society of Iowa*

Professor William D. Houlette of Drake University in Des Moines has been appointed to the Board of Curators of the Society by Governor William S. Beardsley. Dr. Houlette succeeds Curator Wallace E. Sherlock of Fairfield, who asked not to be reappointed. The other eight members of the Board were reappointed by the Governor for two-year terms.

Dr. Frederick I. Kuhns, Research Associate of the Society, has resigned to accept a position as professor of religion at Rocky Mountain College at Billings, Montana.

Robert A. Rutland joined the staff of the Society on September 1, as Research Associate. Mr. Rutland received his B. A. degree at Oklahoma University, his M. A. from Cornell University, and is scheduled to receive his doctorate from Vanderbilt University in 1953. He has been employed in the field of public relations at both Cornell University and at Texas Tech, and has contributed historical articles to *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* and *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. Mr. Rutland holds a reserve commission as lieutenant in the United States Army, and during World War II saw service in the Pacific theater. In 1946 his popular history of Okinawa was published by the U. S. Army Exchange Service in Shanghai.

#### SUPERINTENDENT'S CALENDAR

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| June 23 | Addressed Hubinger Company Management Club at Keokuk.           |
| June 28 | Attended Regional Rotary Meeting at Amana.                      |
| July 8  | Addressed Centennial of the Presbyterian Synod of Iowa at Ames. |

The following members were elected to membership in the State Historical Society during the months of June, July, and August:

*Ainsworth*

Rev. Verne V. Wortman

*Allison*

Mrs. Kenneth W. Newbury

*Altoona*

Miss Fay Wilson

*Ames*

Miss Julia M. Faltinson

- William E. Nichols  
Miss Ann Nygaard  
*Anamosa*  
Mrs. Fred Spragg  
*Baxter*  
Robert S. Poage  
*Bellevue*  
Mrs. H. L. Nicholson  
*Bettendorf*  
Miss Erma E. Purdy  
*Boone*  
Elmer E. Wiemer  
*Britt*  
Mrs. Ada Chaplin  
*Brooklyn*  
Mrs. Max Young  
*Burlington*  
Vincent P. Cullen  
*Castana*  
Miss Ruth Gingles  
*Cedar Falls*  
Dr. C. T. Adamson  
Verle W. Allbee  
W. H. Wellman  
*Cedar Rapids*  
R. H. Allen  
Louis F. Black  
W. J. Brown  
Harry J. Chadima  
Milo A. Chehak  
Mrs. Wallace Darling  
Gordon Fennell  
C. Eugene Fifield  
Harry J. Gunderson  
W. C. Hanson  
Miss Viola Hartkemeyer  
Stewart Holmes  
R. L. Johnson  
R. S. Johnston  
Mrs. R. S. Johnston  
Mrs. Vern G. Kelley  
Bedford P. Lattner  
T. F. McPartland  
Van Vechten Shaffer  
Mrs. Charles A. Spears  
R. A. Thornton  
Frank C. Welch  
*Center Junction*  
Truman Stanton  
*Centerville*  
Mrs. George E. Brown  
Mrs. Bruce Davis  
Miss Florice Moffitt  
*Chariton*  
Mrs. Sophia Standfield  
*Charles City*  
Mrs. Keith Webster  
*Clarion*  
Miss Harriett M. Morton  
*Clear Lake*  
Douglas G. Swale  
*Clinton*  
David J. Delaney  
Laverne C. Hendrickson  
Rev. L. A. Rohret  
Mrs. W. T. R. Smith  
*Colfax*  
Howard E. Bell  
*Conrad*  
Mrs. J. P. Brindle  
*Corydon*  
Mrs. M. A. Meacham  
*Dallas Center*  
Gordon Carter

- G. C. Kelly  
John S. Rhinehart  
*Davenport*  
Miss Fina H. Andersen  
Walter H. Beuse  
Tom A. Coughlin  
V. O. Figge  
Mrs. Vara Collins Garrison  
George Gaylor  
Louis Hintze  
J. M. Hutchinson  
Mrs. Martha E. Lewis  
Martin F. McCarthy  
Mrs. Edward L. Ruhl  
Miss Ella Soenke  
Walter E. Vieth  
*Dayton*  
Miss Erma Dutcher  
*Des Moines*  
John M. Baker  
C. Nelson Brodrick  
Griffith Brogan  
Curtis Dean Buckley  
E. F. Buckley  
Miss Antoinette M. Cronk  
Miss Eva Curless  
Everett M. Griffith  
R. F. Hrubetz  
Lloyd Huff  
Dr. Alice Hunter  
Miss Jenivie L. Jack  
Miss Truth Lamont  
Herbert P. Marshall  
Rev. Alvin L. Morris  
Marve Narramore  
J. Earl Nelson  
Joseph Patrick  
Miss A. Phippin  
Guy L. Roberts  
Mrs. Freeda Smith  
Sidney B. Smith  
Virgil C. Smith  
Gerald W. Stoops  
L. J. Tesdall  
E. B. Thompson  
Paul C. Thompson  
John H. Wetherell  
A. P. Wolfe  
W. W. Woods  
*Dubuque*  
David B. Cassat  
W. W. Dauner  
Miss Ruth A. Wodrich  
*Durant*  
Mrs. Otis M. Ellis  
George F. Harling  
*Elkader*  
Miss Verna M. O'Connor  
William J. Witt  
*Emmetsburg*  
William Zunkel  
*Fairfield*  
Mrs. Yvonne Squires  
*Forest City*  
O. N. Gjellefald  
*Fort Dodge*  
Miss Mildred Hogan  
F. L. Loomis  
*Gilman*  
Mrs. Charles M. Vande Kamp  
*Gladbrook*  
C. Floyd Harris  
*Greenfield*  
Carl A. Carlson



*Grinnell*

Mrs. Paul Kiesel

R. S. Kinsey

*Humboldt*

J. L. Campbell

*Independence*

Percy L. Lynch

*Iowa City*

Fred W. Boerner

Mrs. P. C. Coast

Roy Ewers

Robert C. Hardin

Clark Houghton

Mrs. Nova L. Johnson

Alexander C. Kern

Robert A. Lockheart

J. G. McDaniel

C. G. Manning

W. W. Morris

George Nagle

Leland Nagle

Rev. P. Hewison Pollock

Dr. Leland E. Stillwell

E. R. Williams

*Jewell*

Albert S. Jacobson

*Kent*

Mrs. Miriam W. Brown

*Lake Mills*

Gordon W. Aasgaard

Irving A. Nelson

*Lake View*

Fred Wells

*Laurens*

Neil L. Maurer

*Lone Rock*

Miss Helen H. Jensen

*Lorimor*

Frank Harris

*Manchester*

Miss Pearl H. Reed

Miss Ethelyn Smith

*Maquoketa*

Mrs. Lela M. Kukukuck

Mrs. Claudine H. Rolfs

*Marengo*

Rev. E. Jasmann

*Marion*

Miss Emma R. Klein

*Marshalltown*

Mrs. Martin A. Johnson

Will A. Lane

Mrs. Clair G. Mason

*Mason City*

Mrs. C. R. Messer

R. A. Potter

*Mitchellville*

M. J. Nash

*Monmouth*

Dr. Willard Ingalls

*Monticello*

Mrs. A. J. H. McNeill

*Mount Vernon*

Charles H. Ford

Howard D. Schnittjer

*Muscatine*

Elmer V. Swanson

Rev. J. J. Welsh

*Nevada*

Nevada Public School

*New Providence*

John A. Bartholow

*New Sharon*

Fred Everett

*Newton*

M. M. Campbell  
Mrs. C. W. Griebeling  
Miss Myrna J. Guthrie  
Mrs. J. W. Leaming  
Dr. D. M. Reese  
Miss Ardell Welle

*Oelwein*

W. Palmer Wilson

*Ottumwa*

C. A. Bergman  
J. C. Blackford  
Miss Teresa A. Nye

*Perry*

C. S. Johnson

*Red Oak*

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 Dr. Walter F. Peterson, Milwaukee  
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 J. A. Romsa, Burns

### *Iowa Historical Activities*

Under the direction of Dr. William D. Houlette of the history department of Drake University, twenty-two students in a summer session class in Iowa history made a tour of Madison County on July 1, to observe sites of scenic and historic interest. Among the sites visited were the Imes covered bridge near Hanley; the stone house built by George Hattle, west of Hanley; the Hogan Queen stone house in Scott Township; the Holliwell covered bridge, southeast of Winterset; and the Madison County courthouse and the McBride covered bridge northeast of Winterset. The tour ended at Pammel State Park with a picnic and a discussion of the points of interest visited.

The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad celebrated its 100th anniversary on October 12 with observances along its entire line.

The Adair County Historical Society met on June 8 at Creston. The following officers were re-elected: Mrs. Myra Brown, president; Faye Dory, vice-president; and Elmer Johnson, secretary.

A meeting of former members of the Howard County Historical Society met on June 30 in Cresco to reorganize the group. Mrs. C. E. Farnsworth was active in the movement.

The Guthrie County Historical Society held a meeting at Panora June 22,



to attend to unfinished business. Plans were made for entertaining the Madison County Historical Society at some time in the future. The July meeting of the Society was held at Stuart on the 20th.

The Wyoming (Iowa) Historical Society held its annual meeting August 25 at Monticello. Henry Fishwild was elected president; Mrs. Nellie Ather-ton, secretary; and Ralph Orth, treasurer.

The Ringgold County Historical Society re-elected its officers at their annual meeting August 14 at Mount Ayr. Officers of the Society are: Miss Eva F. Stahl, president; Arthur Palmer, vice-president; Myrta Abigail Shan-non, secretary; Mrs. J. A. Bliss, treasurer.

The Wright County Historical Society was the successful bidder in the sale of Lake No. 6 schoolhouse which was sold at auction on July 31. The price paid was \$227.50. The Society's interest in the schoolhouse is due to the fact that it was there that organizational meetings for the 4-H clubs were held, led by O. H. Benson, county superintendent of schools. Plans are being made to move the schoolhouse to Clarion and use it for a 4-H museum.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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